

**PROBLEMS
OF PHILOSOPHY
AND RELIGION**

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FOREWORD

The general aim of the Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy, Banaras Hindu University, as that of other similar Centres functioning on an all India basis, is the pursuit and promotion of excellence in philosophical thought. In pursuance of this aim, the Centre offers encouragement to teachers and Fellows attached to it and the Department of Philosophy by publishing monographs and papers embodying the results of their researches in specialized fields. It is not always possible to make commercial publishers take interests in the publication of such specialized studies. Earlier the Centre published Prof. J. L. Mehata's study of M. Heidegger's philosophy under the title "The Philosophy of Martin Heidegger." We are now offering to the scholarly world a collection of research papers by Dr. R. K. Tripathi, a Senior Reader in the Department of Philosophy. Dr. Tripathi is an Advaita-Vedāntin by conviction and knows the art of presenting his views with lucidity and force. While he may not succeed in converting the avowed critics and opponents of metaphysics to his view, he deserves credit for having a consistent pattern of concepts embracing important metaphysical and religious issues.

I hope these papers will be found interesting and useful by a wide circle of readers.

Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy
Banaras Hindu University
March 18, 1971

N. K. Devaraja
General Editor

INTRODUCTION

Most of the papers included in this volume are published elsewhere. It would therefore appear that there was no need of reprinting them in the form of a book, specially when the articles are on varied topics and do not seem to have the unity of a book. My apology for reprinting these papers is twofold. Firstly, a number of my friends, both from India and abroad, who appreciated my writings, expressed a desire that I should have collection of papers published. So I am to be blamed only to the extent my friends are to be blamed for their appreciation and encouragement. Secondly, although these papers are on varied subjects, there is a certain underlying unity of thought. A careful reader can easily discern a basic standpoint in the discussion of the various problems.

I do not claim any originality; in the realm of truth originality is a suspect. I may at best claim credit for a certain form of presentation. One may notice here a certain method of treatment; it consists of exposition, comparison, distinction and criticism. The different problems have been attacked from the Advaitic standpoint. The Advaitic view has been not merely stated but also argued out in a manner so as to meet the difficulties of a modern reader. To bring out clearly my point of view, I have drawn parallels not only with Indian schools but also with western systems. But to avoid the risk of misunderstanding likely to be produced by comparisons, I am equally keen about distinctions. Distinctions serve, no less than comparisons, the purpose of clarification. Throughout, the emphasis is more on critical thinking than on mere description and documentation. But criticism is more in the spirit of appreciation than of refutation. It is hoped that these papers will help the reader in appreciating Indian philosophy in general and Advaita Vedānta in particular.

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If only to orient the reader without entering into arguments, the line of thought which gives unity to these essays may be briefly

stated. I hold the view that philosophy is a kind of spiritual awakening following the realisation of the emptiness of the temporal life of self-gratification. Inspired by the feeling of disillusionment about the temporal or the false absolute, philosophy is necessarily a critical search for the true absolute or the eternal. Philosophy therefore either serves this spiritual purpose or is completely useless. As the eternal is not something to be brought about, Karma cannot directly help us; only knowledge can enable us to reach the eternal. This knowledge of the eternal cannot be had with the help of natural *pramāṇas* or sources of knowledge as they are necessarily conditioned and confined to time and space. The message of the eternal or the transcendent can be heard only from *śruti* or scripture, and so *śruti* or revelation is necessary for philosophy. Reason cannot independently take us to the transcendent; it has the only function of presenting the message of the *śruti* consistently and of supporting it by meeting possible objections or doubts. But by *śruti*, we are not to understand merely somebody's statement; for us *śruti* is the eternal message of the eternal.

The eternal or the transcendent though beyond all thought and hence unspeakable is nonetheless not unknowable, and that for two reasons. Firstly, the eternal, being of the nature of pure consciousness, is self-luminous and being our very self, it is open to immediate experience. Appearances constitute the absolute of Bradley and Hegel and so their absolute does not seem to be really transcendent. Nāgārjuna's *Śūnya* though not nihil is nevertheless not identified with our self and therefore seems to be too transcendent to be realised. The Vedāntic absolute is at once immanent and transcendent.

The central point of Advaitism is that unless the world of plurality and change is regarded as unreal or false, Mukti or liberation will not be possible, at least not by knowledge. Knowledge can destroy only ignorance and its product the false and nothing else. Not only Mukti but also Sarvajñatva or omniscience of man and incarnation of God cannot be made intelligible unless the world of appearance is false. Man can know everything only in the sense that he knows the essential unity of everything and not the details. God can be born in this physical universe only if the physical universe does not bind Him, and that is possible only if it is false. God cannot *really* become a finite being like man. Further, it is only the Advaitic view of reality that can give unity to the Upaniṣadic teachings and can make the key-

statements (such as the 'knower of Ātman crosses suffering', 'the knower of Brahman becomes omniscient', 'the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman) of the Upaniṣads intelligible.

The Advaitic method is neither that of pure *a priori* speculation of the rationalists nor that of pure dialectic (Bradley and Nagārjuna) nor that of common sense (Nyāya Vaiśeṣike). The method followed is that of critical analysis (in depth) of experience directed by Śruti. Philosophy is born with the rejection of common sense; it must also reject reason as empty. But negation is not enough. There must be also the positive assurance of the Śruti about the nature of the transcendent. The acceptance of śruti necessitates the acceptance of Īśvara as the eternal knower and teacher of the eternal truth. The place of Īśvara in Advaita Vedānta is important. Īśvara is not false like the world (jaḍa jagat). Īśvara is Brahman knowing Himself as Brahman eternally.

When it is found out that the snake is false and the rope is real, what is meant is not that the rope had changed in the form of snake nor that the snake becomes rope again, nor that the snake is elsewhere, nor that the snake was not even seen but that the snake made a false claim of having independent reality. Its relation to the rope is only onesided; the rope need not appear as snake. The same is the relation of the world and Brahman, and freedom means not the attainment of any status but only the realisation of the true status of Being. All problems or experiences of suffering emanate from our consciousness of duality, and so they are all dissolved when there is the experience of unity (Brahman).

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Very often Sanskrit terms have been used as English terms and I am aware that this is very inconvenient for the western reader. But anyone writing on Indian philosophy knows that the use of Sanskrit terms cannot be helped. However, I have taken care to translate the Sanskrit terms wherever they have been used.

I am thankful to Dr. N. K. Devaraja, Director, Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy, Banaras Hindu University, for his interest in the publication of this collection. He has been good enough to sanction the publication of this book by the Centre. I must also

express my grateful thanks to Prof. Eliot Deutsch, Editor, *Philosophy East and West*, Prof. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Editor, *Philosophical Annual*, Prof. N. K. Devaraja, Editor, *Ānvikṣikī*, Shri Muruges Mudaliar, Editor, *Śaiva Siddhānta*, and the Editor of Dr. Bhagavan Das Centenary Volume, Kashi Vidyapitha for permission to reprint the articles published in their respective journals. I cannot adequately thank my friend and colleague Shri Kamalakar Mishra, lecturer in the Department of Philosophy for his help in various ways. I am grtaeful to Prof. K. D. Bhattacharya of Visva Bharati for his kind encouragement and appreciateon.

R. K. Tripathi

March, 1971
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THE CONCEPT OF PHILOSOPHY†

To understand the nature of a discipline we require to know three things : its field, its method and its aim or purpose. In the case of philosophy, the field has been so varied that it is rather hazardous to make any generalisation; differences are no less regarding the question of method, nor is there any unanimity regarding the aim of Philosophy either. Under the circumstances therefore any inductive view of philosophy seems to be impossible; there appears to be no formula to which an exception cannot be found out. And if instead of evolving a common formula we simply accept a particular view and reject others, it would be pure dogmatism, unless one gives an objective principle of preference. What would be the factual value of such a view? Not being descriptive, such a view would only be prescriptive and would not command acceptance. A serious predicament indeed.

But there is the other side of this desperate situation. There must be some common feature because of which the term philosophy is applicable to the variety of things called by this name. If this cannot be denied, what is that common feature? This common feature is certainly not to be found either in the object or in the method or in the aim. This, we believe, is to be found only in the form of consciousness of which philosophy is a product; this is the factor which is not only common to all the various types of philosophy but is also a feature of philosophy distinguishing it at once from religion on the one hand and science on the other. So we begin with the question : What is the form or peculiar nature of philosophic consciousness?

† Printed in the Proceedings of the first seminar of C. A. 5, P. (B. H. U.) on The Concept of Philosophy 1968.

Normally our consciousness is some kind of object consciousness, i.e. it is naturally turned toward some kind of object; this is because all life depends on object-consciousness; consciousness can be useful in life only by being objective or by paying heed to objects. To be objective is the natural disposition of consciousness. But let us add that by object we do not here mean the physical object only but anything which confronts consciousness, anything other than consciousness to which it is directed. In the objective attitude consciousness is always directed forward to something else whether it be in the practical or in the theoretical sphere.

Had there been only an unbroken flow of this objective mode of consciousness there would have been no philosophy; animals who can have no holiday from objective-consciousness can have no philosophy. Whatever else philosophy may be, it is certainly not any object-consciousness. Whatever be the differences regarding the definition of philosophy, nobody identifies it with a study of some object. Systems of philosophy do not profess or pretend to add to our stock of the knowledge of any kind of object. It is here that philosophy distinguishes itself at once from science and religion, both being forms of object-consciousness, which philosophy is not.

If not objective, what is the form of philosophic consciousness and how does it arise? Without mincing words, we may say that it is that form of consciousness in which instead of going forward toward an object, consciousness turns upon itself; instead of going ahead, it retraces or reviews; it becomes reflective. So philosophic consciousness is the reflective awareness of certain types of object-consciousness. A particular philosophy is always the self-consciousness of a particular kind of objective consciousness. Science, religion, art, morality, poetry, history, law etc. are all different kinds of object-consciousness, and as reflection is possible on all these we can have philosophy of science, of religion, of art, of language, of law, etc. Ordinarily man is interested in being objective, i.e. in having science, religion, art, etc. and not in reflecting on them. But at the same time it cannot be denied that sometimes instead of using or pursuing science, art, religion, etc. we like to ask what science, religion, art, etc. are, and this is the beginning of philosophy. What occasions this kind of self-consciousness or what is the value of it, are questions to be taken up subsequently, but it is certain that such a kind of reflective consciousness is there as a matter of fact.

Although reflective consciousness is a fact, it is not a very common fact; reflection is but an occasional episode of life, and of the life of very few persons at that. This is but as it should be, because reflection being a suspension of the objective attitude is verily a hindrance to practical life. Reflection on seeing stops seeing even as reflection on doing stops doing. This obstruction or opposition is not onesided; because just as reflection stops the objective flow of consciousness, absorption in the objective attitude no less prevents reflection. Ordinarily the world is so much with us that unless something serious happens we cannot reflect; we do not want to reflect; something must happen to weaken the hold of the world on us; something to force us to turn back, something to awaken us.

What is it that forces us to turn back, to reflect? Is it curiosity or wonder that gives rise to reflection? Certainly not, if by curiosity or wonder is meant the propelling force of the objective-consciousness. Heidegger seems to have hit the mark in his interpretation of 'astonishment' as the origin of philosophy according to Plato and Aristotle. He says, "In astonishment we restrain ourselves. We step back, as it were, from being, from the fact that it is as it is and not otherwise. And astonishment is not used up in this retreating from the Being of Being, but, as this retreating and self-restraining it is at the same time forcibly drawn to and, as it were, held fast by that from which it retreats. Thus, astonishment is disposition in which and from which the Being of being unfolds".* So it is only if curiosity, wonder or astonishment means a kind of withdrawal or retreat and not a kind of forward movement of consciousness that it can be regarded as the origin of philosophy.

The occasion for this kind of withdrawal or retreat is either some kind of conflict or disillusionment; but since conflict itself is incipient disillusionment, we can say that reflection is always due to some kind of disappointment or frustration.† It is inconceivable how man would start taking interest in questions regarding truth or knowledge or reality without the experience of controversy or correction.

* *What is Philosophy*, p. 85.

† Heidegger—*What is Philosophy*, p. 43 (The question about the nature of something awakens at those times when that, whose nature is being questioned, has become obscure and confused, when at the same time, the relationship of man to what is being questioned, has become uncertain or has even been shattered.)

We claim that every system of philosophy whether it be speculative dogmatism or positivism, scepticism or analysis, materialism or idealism, each one of these is at bottom an awareness of some wrong belief, a kind of correction or reflection. It is in this sense that our definition of philosophy as a kind of selfconsciousness is most comprehensive. It is the experience of cancellation that impedes the free forward flow of consciousness; it is like our stumbling against a stone and looking back. When Plato turns from becoming to being, it is because of cancellation; when the sceptic proposes to doubt everything it is because some correction has already taken place; the positivist rejects metaphysics as pseudoscience for the same reason; the idealist and the realists in refuting each other exhibit the same feature; dialecticians like Kant and Nāgārjuna as well as speculative philosophers like Spinoza and Leibnitz are all disengaging themselves from some belief. All philosophy is reflection born of cancellation. Philosophy thus born will not be an exercise of reason or thought; it will rather be a critical analysis of reason or thought. By critical analysis we mean the laying bare of or digging the presuppositions of reason or thought; it is only by discovering the presuppositions that we can get rid of them and it is only by getting rid of them that we can know truth. Philosophy is therefore the deepening of this reflective process; it is like boring into consciousness. It is neither an employment of a new method of knowledge nor the discovery of a new kind of object.

Certain consequences follow from this view. If reflection born of correction is the origin of philosophy it follows that it is not mere introspection or retrospection but a critical revaluation. Philosophic consciousness is a kind of revaluing or reassessment, and therefore always implies two levels of knowledge or experience, namely, the reassessment and the object of it. This is another way of saying that philosophic consciousness is search for truth, a search occasioned by the experience of falsity in some sphere or the other. Further, it is evident that the more universal the type of object-consciousness of which you want to have a philosophy, the more universal will your philosophy be. Consciousness of truth or reality being the most basic, the most fundamental consciousness, reflection on this mode of consciousness would naturally be the most fundamental philosophy. Also, it follows that philosophy need not be one: by the very nature of case, there can be as many philosophies as there are objective modes of consciousness. Again, it is clear that since reflection is always

possible only on some objective-mode of consciousness, one cannot look at philosophy from outside as it is not an objective mode of consciousness at all. Reflection is always reflection on some objective consciousness. Reflection cannot turn upon itself; there can be no self-consciousness of self-consciousness. Philosophy is the only discipline which defines itself in defining others, a discipline which cannot define itself in the objective way. There can be no such thing as philosophy of philosophy, unless by philosophy we mean some kind of objective-consciousness; philosophy itself is philosophy of philosophy.

But are we not reflecting on philosophy? Yes, but that is because sometimes philosophy itself assumes an objective attitude. It happens like this. Reflection on an objective mode of consciousness arrests its forward flow, but then it is difficult to keep the objective mode of consciousness suspended for long. We have a natural objective disposition which reasserts itself with a vengeance by converting self-awareness itself into a kind of objective consciousness. It is this tendency which gives rise to dogmatic systems as it is due to an unconscious urge; it is this urge which Kant called metaphysics as a natural disposition; it might also be called transcendental illusion. To remain purely in the reflective attitude is like holding one's breath (something which cannot be done for long); unconsciously under the stress of natural disposition or transcendental illusion one slips into the objective mode and then philosophy ceases to be pure reflection. Controversies in philosophy are due to this slipping into the objective attitude.

We may put the same thing in a different way. The correction of a belief may happen in two ways. One belief may be corrected by accepting another belief, a substitute belief; this is what may be called stunted or arrested reflection; here we start with rejecting one belief but end with having another. Another attitude in which discovery of a false belief may result is the rejection of believing itself i. e. the rejection of all views (dṛṣṭis) as such. Where there is such an attitude we have philosophy as pure reflection or pure dialectic. A universal self-awareness of all views is nothing but the attainment of truth itself. A system of philosophy is thus either of the objective type or of the type of pure reflection. Even an objective type of philosophy being a kind of correction shares the general characteristic of being a kind of self-consciousness.

Philosophy not being an objective mode of consciousness cannot serve our animal existence which depends only on objective consciousness. In other words, philosophy is useless for those who seek utility. It can be conceivably useful only to one who is tormented by the experience of conflict or the consciousness that the whole of animal life may well be a deception. That is, philosophy can be useful only for one who has at least tentatively risen above the objective mode of consciousness or the animal consciousness. The results of philosophic reflection are not always quick at hand, and so the pursuit and cultivation of philosophic consciousness depends on faith, the faith, namely that the pursuit would bear fruit. Until one has attained truth, it is this faith that would sustain philosophy. In this, philosophy is like religion.

But science and religion both must be clearly distinguished from Philosophy. Russell has the acuteness to recognise this distinction when he says, "But between theology and science there is a No Man's land, exposed to attack from both sides; This No Man's Land is philosophy" (History of Western Philosophy p. 10). It is true that philosophy is No Man's Land as it is not one of the many objective modes of consciousness but a surveyor of all. But it is confusing to suggest that it is midway between science and theology. Russell says so because he thinks that philosophy too is a kind of objective knowledge; he does not see that in that case philosophy too would be like science and theology. Moreover, his view of philosophy is not true of all philosophy. He fails to see that philosophy is No Man's Land because it is reflection on all Men's Lands. When Hegel thinks of religion as incipient philosophy he makes the same mistake which Comte makes when he thinks of philosophy as incipient science; the irony is that while both of them are reflecting, they fail to see that philosophy is reflection or a non-objective mode of consciousness. It is only when philosophy is mistaken as an objective mode of knowledge that it may be exposed to attack from both sides and not otherwise.

From the above account, it would appear that the Mādhyaṃka philosophy alone is philosophy proper, being purely reflective. Even Advaita which accepts a positive view of reality would be excluded. But really it is not so. Advaita Vedānta is next to none in criticising all the objective modes of consciousness or the objective categories. The reality which the Advaita accepts is not any object or subject but

the ground of both; even *svarūpa lakṣaṇas* are understood only negatively (*asat vyāvartako sat*). If the Advaita has positive metaphysics it is not because it is not reflective enough, but because it accepts Śruti as a necessary source of knowledge. Brahman as the universal ground of everything is known not on the basis of reason but on the basis of revelation. The acceptance of Śruti is a necessity not merely for the knowledge of Brahman, but also for the knowledge that Brahman can be realized and can be realized here and now; it is not a mere matter of faith. Mere reflection, as in the case of Mādhyamika, can only show the presence of a transcendental illusion giving rise to *dr̥ṣṭis*; only śruti can say that this illusion is actually removed. The Mādhyamika fails to see this point and holds only a negative attitude with the result that it remains uncertain, if not doubtful also-unless reference is made to some authority-whether it is actually possible to get rid of the transcendental illusion which is the inveterate source of all *dr̥ṣṭis*. Since the illusion is transcendental mere awareness of it cannot remove it immediately. Thus the Advaita would appear to be a more complete philosophy than the Mādhyamika which claims to be purer.

Philosophy is thus of a transcendent nature; it transcends all modes of objective consciousness; and there lies its distinction and its autonomy. It can be confused with Science and religion only by losing its transcendence or non-objective form. This transcendent character of philosophy reveals its value also; philosophy can have only a non-objective or non-pragmatic value. Not being interested either in the discovery of any particular type of objects or arrangements of facts or in discovering new methods of knowledge or in any thing objective, philosophy is of necessity an arm-chair affair, i. e. a reflection on what we already know. The merit of this definition is three fold : firstly, it keeps intact the autonomy of philosophy; secondly, it is true of all types of philosophy past, present and even future and is therefore not arbitrary; and finally, one cannot refute it except by accepting it unconsciously i. e. one can refute it only by being self-contradictory. Anyone who attempts to reject our definition would be himself reflecting, because rejection or correction means reflection. One cannot reject reflection without being reflective; reflection is the only universal feature of all philosophy.

THE MEANING OF METAPHYSICS†

The question regarding the nature and value of metaphysics seems to be really speaking a question regarding the Absolute or the Unconditioned. Metaphysics is said to be useless and meaningless because it is concerned with the Unconditioned. Metaphysics therefore stands or falls with the Absolute. Since all talk about the absolute is said to be meaningless, metaphysics can be retained, only if it either ceases to be concerned with the Absolute or else if its concern with the Absolute is not given up, it boldly faces the challenge of positivism and demonstrates the meaningfulness of discourse about the Absolute. Contemporary thought seems to advocate either a complete rejection of metaphysics or if at all, the acceptance of a metaphysics without the Absolute. We on the other hand cast our lot with the view that it is neither possible to dispense with metaphysics nor to have metaphysics without the Absolute.

Metaphysical reality, metaphysical knowledge and metaphysical value, all these refer to the Absolute and so when one of these is rejected, the others also go. It seems to us that whenever any one of the above is rejected, the rejection is always sought to be achieved by accepting explicitly or implicitly empirical knowledge, empirical reality, and empirical values as absolute and ultimate. This shows that the very nature of or the logic of the emergence of metaphysical consciousness is missed; the relation between the metaphysical and the empirical is not understood. Metaphysics is not an extension of empirical knowledge; it is neither more knowledge of empirical things nor a knowledge of

† Printed in the Indian Philosophical Annual of C. A. S. P., Madras University, 1967.

more things; it is neither continuous nor co-ordinate with the empirical or scientific knowledge. Rather, metaphysics is the dethronement or supersession of empirical knowledge and reality, because the metaphysical inquiry arises only when the empirical which is unconsciously accepted as the unquestioned absolute becomes a suspect and we are disillusioned about its absoluteness. So long as the empirical holds us and we are under its sway, there seems to be no conceivable occasion or use of any metaphysical adventure. On the other hand, when the pretensions of the empirical seem to be dubious, it becomes natural and necessary for us to enquire whether there is any ground to stand upon; it becomes our greatest concern to pursue this enquiry or else life seems to be meaningless and baseless. It is in the context of this disillusionment about the empirical that metaphysics is born. So metaphysics is not a search for another reality called the Absolute, but a critical evaluation of what is already masquerading as the Absolute and claiming our whole attention. The relation between the Absolute of metaphysics and the empirical or the relative is not that between two realities or two kinds of realities, but that between the real and the false or the genuine and the hoax. It is for this reason that both cannot be accepted simultaneously; one has to make room for the other; there is no question of comparison or competition between the two as one is the transcendence of the other. Again, it is in this manner that metaphysics is not a positive construction but is a necessary negation implying evaluation and transcendence. Had the empirical not claimed absoluteness, its rejection would have been unnecessary. Had it not been the very basis of our life, its rejection would not have created a crisis and an existential concern. Life is nothing if not the acceptance of something as absolute; the negation of the absoluteness of the empirical creates a vacuum which life cannot tolerate and hence the metaphysical enquiry. After the apparent is rejected, life seems to be utterly shorn of meaning until the real absolute is discovered. It is not possible to justify the apparently absurd pursuit of metaphysics unless it is taken as the search for the meaning of life.

How is it, one may ask, that the empirical which is the very basis of our life, becomes a suspect? It may be at once admitted that the doubt regarding the empirical is not based on any *a priori* argument or any criterion of truth and reality. Arguments come later. The formulation of arguments as well as their appeal presuppose a kind of awakening. It seems that the crisis takes place originally in the sphere

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of values and then passes on to the spheres of knowledge and reality. Everything seems to be full of suffering, everything momentary. Either reflection on the inevitability and universality of death or reflection on the inherent impermanence of things forces on us the problem: what for am I living? Am I chasing shadows? Is life just an empty show or is there anything absolute and permanent? If not, why not hasten the end of life? What is after all the ultimate goal? This question may not arise in the life of most of us, but it does arise for some of us at least, and to those for whom it arises it is a problem whether to be or not to be. To one who is in the grip of this problem it appears, as Spinoza puts it, that one "is seized with a deadly disease seeing death straight before him if a remedy is not found". In this sense metaphysics is a personal and existential concern. It is a resolute and desperate effort to seek the *real* absolute, a conscious endeavour to replace what is unconsciously accepted as absolute. The nature and value of metaphysics is to be appreciated not so much in terms of its professed propositions as with reference to the existential situation in which it is born and by which it is nourished.

From the above, it should be obvious that for us metaphysics is not the creation of an *a priori* speculative system. Nor is its real concern with questions regarding creation and explanation or questions of being and becoming, or one and many, or matter and mind, etc. Our interest in these and related problems is not primary but secondary. There is no existential justification for our interest in all these questions unless they are related to the basic question regarding our ultimate destiny. It would also follow from our view that the metaphysician can have no real communication with those who are not under the spell of the above existential concern. He can have meaningful discourse or dialogue only with those who are seized with the above problem; otherwise he would pass for a mad man, even as those hankering after the empirical seem to be mad to him.

It may be argued that unless there is something to guarantee our success in the search for the absolute, metaphysics would appear as a kind of wishful thinking or even a kind of abnormality. Ordinarily no normal man thinks of running after the absolute. There is no doubt that metaphysics is not a normal or common phenomenon, but that does not make it abnormal. Persons mad after the metaphysical pursuit have been respected the world over as the sanest and the wisest.

To declare them abnormal would only recoil on oneself. As regards a prior and public demonstration of the reality of the Absolute, we can only point out again that this question arises only for those who are under the charm of the empirical; and not for those who are relatively free from that charm. Freedom from the spell of the empirical is itself the guarantee regarding the Absolute. There is no question of having the absolute or not having it; we can never be without it. The absolute is already operative in life irrespective of our attitude towards it. The ordinary man accepts the empirical itself as the absolute and shirks the question whether it is *really* the absolute. The metaphysician feels obliged to ask the question whether the apparent is also the real. The question whether there is anything like the absolute does not arise; if the absolute were not there, how could the empirical even appear as absolute? Mistake about the absolute only proves the absolute; it is what makes the mistake possible; the absolute is not absent but elusive.

Metaphysics so conceived is obviously not a mere academic or intellectual pursuit nor a mere scientific urge for more knowledge or more definite knowledge; it is a living spiritual concern rooted in a changed direction of our life and affecting its depth. Those the direction of whose life is not changed as a result of the spiritual awakening, cannot appreciate the nature and value of metaphysics; it is neither meant for the common man nor for the scientist as it is not concerned with the empirical. Neither a friend nor a foe of science, metaphysics belongs to a different level of consciousness. There is necessarily an element of faith in the metaphysical pursuit even as it is there in scientific pursuit. Just as the scientist proceeds on the basis of the implicit faith that the world is law-governed, even so metaphysics is sustained by the faith that the pursuit of the absolute must end in realization. There is no question of turning back to what has already been rejected, i. e. the empirical; that would make the rejection only methodological as in the case of Descartes, and not spiritual as in the case of Plato or Spinoza.

The scientific temper of the age seems to miss the existential character of metaphysics. Russell complains that philosophers "have allowed their opinions as to the constitution of the universe to be influenced by the desire for edification."¹ Edifying beliefs are somehow proved to be true. This is for Russell sheer treachery and prevents

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philosophy from being disinterested search for truth. To blend a theory as to the nature of the world with an ethical doctrine is a kind of dishonesty for him. Needless to say that Russell fails to see that an ethical theory and a view of the world are blended for the excellent reason that the question of value is related to the question of reality. The very question regarding reality arises because the question concerning ultimate value has already arisen. The metaphysician's interest in a theory as to the nature of the world emanates from his existential concern regarding his ultimate goal and destiny. He is not primarily interested in the constitution of the world nor does he pretend to give a scientific account; he presents only a spiritual perspective. Our search for truth must be no doubt impartial and unprejudiced, but certainly not purposeless; there must be a motive to inspire and to sustain the search. Russell is not able to see the distinction between the motive of a metaphysician and that of a scientist; he regards philosophy as a no man's land between theology and science.¹ He does not see that while philosophy is pilgrimage, science is plunder as the one is spiritual while the other is just utilitarian.

If for Russell evil enters philosophy through ethical doctrines or motives, there are those for whom the source of evil in philosophy is ontology. The metaphysician becomes unintelligible and absurd when he begins to talk about some transcendent reality not accessible to all. He seems to be ridiculous when he begins to talk about all things, because omniscience is a patent impossibility. Thanks to the positivist's clarification, all ontologising is out² today. There is nothing like metaphysical reality or metaphysical knowledge much less metaphysical value. It is worthwhile examining certain forms of these denials.

There is, to begin with, the common kind of scepticism which derives support from metaphysical differences. Nobody truly knows the absolute or else why should the metaphysicians differ? If our thesis that metaphysics is an individual's search for the real absolute is admitted, metaphysical differences become intelligible without producing scepticism. Every one of us has to solve the problem in his own way as everyone has to live the truth in his own way. Moreover, the medium through which truth is expressed may be itself responsible for differences. This is why the more cautious metaphysicians like to teach through silence. Differences seem to be only at the periphery and not at the centre. They produce scepticism only in those who are already sceptic-

tical. Metaphysics cannot be judged from without. From within it would appear that metaphysical differences do not prove the absence but the elusiveness of the absolute.

We may next note the Kantian formulation of agnosticism which rules out knowledge of the unconditioned to make room for faith. If all knowledge is conditioned, how can the unconditioned be known? The simple answer to this would be that the unconditioned can be known by deconditioning ourselves. The possibility of deconditioning has got to be accepted or else faith itself will become impossible. If faith does not culminate in knowledge, there will be nothing to sustain it. In our tradition, the possibility of deconditioning is rightly accepted, and the absolute is naturally said to be known through negation or freedom from upādhis and not in any positive way. The metaphysician does not have to grow a third eye; he has only to throw away the blinkers. Even the positive steps are to this end. The obstacles being removed, the absolute shines in its own light.

Thirdly, there is the positivist's dogmatic denial of metaphysical knowledge and reality by accepting an empirical criterion of meaning, namely, verifiability. Obviously, the positivist is a man of wounded vanity, avenging himself on the metaphysician. But as a protagonist of the empirical, he is right in holding that metaphysical propositions do not have any literal significance. Language is primarily meant for empirical discourse, and so in the realm of metaphysics which is concerned with the transcendent, it ceases to be literal, but not meaningless. Metaphysical propositions affect life; they are discussed and are communicated; they are surely not like a meaningless jumble of words. They can only be extruded from empirical discourse and not rejected as meaningless.⁴ Metaphysical propositions should be only distinguished and not denied. The positivist is again right that there is no such thing as *a priori* knowledge of the transcendent. In the west positivism is chronic because there metaphysics is *a priori* thinking. And so when the positivist demolishes *a priori* synthetic propositions, nothing is left except science. The positivist's criticism of the *a priori* does not affect our view, as metaphysics for us is only a critical evaluation of the relative and not an *a priori* positive construction. The fault of the positivist is that he tries to understand metaphysics without having the metaphysical orientation or without understanding that the very birth of metaphysics is a negation of the empirical. He blames others for his own blindness.

The positivist's onslaught on ontologising seems to have forced certain contemporary thinkers to have some kind of metaphysics without ontology. According to what is called a revisionist view of metaphysics one should neither talk of all things nor of any transcendent reality. One should be satisfied with just a conceptual framework (map) of the universe and for that too no finality should be claimed. There can be any number of such conceptual schemes ever open to revision, and the choice of one as against the others is not a question of truth but only a question of "the less good and the better".⁵

If metaphysics has such friends, it needs no enemies. This rather tenuous view of metaphysics is a complete surrender to the positivist. It is like feeling content with mere husk; because metaphysics without ontology is sheer travesty; it is irrelevant to the spiritual crisis behind metaphysics. A mere conceptual scheme having no truth value and no finality cannot be the basis of life. Life needs the absolute. Moreover, the question of ultimate goal is a question concerning value which cannot be decided without going into the question of ultimate reality. Metaphysics has got to be ontology.⁶ The plight of the western friends of metaphysics is that while they see that "clarity is not enough", they are not able to meet the positivist denial of the possibility of knowing the absolute. The Western mind is at sea here because it tries to know the absolute by thought and naturally fails, as the absolute must be beyond thought; speculative metaphysics must be given up. We should neither submit to the positivist nor ignore him; we should rather meet him halfway in criticizing speculative metaphysics without abandoning critical metaphysics.

As already pointed out, it cannot be held that the absolute is unknown or unknowable; we are already with the absolute. The agnostic, the sceptic and the positivist, all accept something as absolute in as much as they all accept something as rock-bottom. Until the real absolute is discovered, something else occupies the throne; there can be no vacuum in life. The absolute reasserts itself in its very denial. Metaphysics is nothing but carrying on the process of negation till the real absolute which cannot be any more denied is reached. The absolute cannot be known as a thing nor can it be known in the objective attitude, because it is beyond all relation and duality. In other words,

the absolute cannot be revealed by anything else; if its absoluteness is to be kept intact it must be self-luminous. The problem, therefore, is not of knowing the absolute but of un-knowing the relative. After a complete rejection of the absolute nothing else remains to be done. On account of our deep rooted empiricism, it appears that the negation of the empirical will be followed by a vacuum (*asad iva pratibhāii*), but such a fear is baseless because if the relative did not point to something beyond, i. e. the absolute, it would itself become the absolute.

The absolute then must be self-existent and self-luminous; at the same time it must also be supreme value. The being-in-itself must also be the being-for-itself or else it will be relative. Metaphysical knowledge is therefore not for anything else; it is an end in itself; it is unlike the knowledge of an object having utility. It follows then that the absolute must be our very self or rather the self of everything (*ātmā sarvasya ātmā*). Only as our supreme self can it be unconditionally experienced, and only as our supreme self, it can also be supreme value; because only the self is for itself and all else is for the sake of self. So only the supreme self can be the real absolute. It is in this way that metaphysics turns out to be the search for absolute self. Knowing the self is knowing everything as the self. The metaphysician's omniscience—his use of all and every—should be understood to refer to this kind of knowledge and not to a knowledge of particular things.

Metaphysics as the science of the absolute has been the source of culture and spiritual life in all ages and societies. Persons of most extraordinary intellect and ability, persons universally respected for their character and personality have staked their all for the sake of metaphysical pursuit. Instead of dismissing this universal phenomenon, it would be wiser to go to the root of the matter with some humility and receptivity. We should have the openness to appreciate the existential situation to which metaphysics is relevant and to which it owes its origin. We are here face to face with the central problem of life and it will not do to shirk it. The onus of explaining the great role of metaphysics in life lies on those who have the temerity to reject metaphysics as meaningless as also on those who hesitate to take it to be a search for the absolute self.

1. *History of Western Philosophy* (5th Impression), p. 863.
2. *supra*, p. 10.
3. Ryle, G., *Nature of Metaphysics*, ed. Pears, p. 149.
4. *Nature of Metaphysics*, ed. Pears, see Warmock, p. 127.
5. *Contemporary Philosophical Problems*, ed. Y. H. Krikorian and Abraham Edel, H. H. price, p. 278.
6. It should be obvious that we are not using the term metaphysics or ontology in the sense decried by Heidegger.

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NON-SPECULATIVE METAPHYSICS†

Metaphysics, as it is generally understood, is an attempt to comprehend the Unconditioned. Even the enemies of metaphysics take this view though some friends of metaphysics may not do so. It is possible to show that all other metaphysical questions such as those regarding the ultimate cause or creator or God, are only variants of the question regarding the Unconditioned. Metaphysics thus understood is necessarily some kind of ontology, and it is this ontology that causes headache and gives rise to all kinds of problems. Contemporary philosophers therefore want to avoid these problems either by not having any metaphysics or by having some kind of metaphysics without ontology. It is the latter class of thinkers who may be called non-speculative; they do not speculate about any kind of reality or being. In contrast, speculative metaphysics tries to give us an idea of some kind of reality which is the ground of what we know empirically. This type of metaphysics is speculative because it does not confine itself to empirical experience but goes beyond it by generalisation of concepts; speculative metaphysics is essentially rationalistic and *a priori* in its method. With these distinctions in mind, we raise the following questions. Why is metaphysics speculative? Is it necessary for metaphysics to be speculative? If not, what is the alternative? In other words, is non-speculative metaphysics possible?

I

The question why metaphysics is speculative refers to the origin of metaphysical consciousness. Human mind has a natural

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disposition to seek the unconditioned and yet everyone is not a metaphysician, because the search for the unconditioned starts and can start only when it is detected that what we know is conditioned. Ordinarily we take our empirical world to be absolute and ultimate, and naturally do not bother about the unconditioned. But if somehow we come to discover that this empirical world of our daily life is conditioned, the question as to the nature of the unconditioned forces itself on us. We begin to wonder what could reality-in-itself or the unconditioned be. The question about the unconditioned is thus not an idle curiosity but a necessary consequence of some kind of disillusionment about the empirical. Not until this happens, would anyone care to speculate about the unconditioned. There seems to be no sense or sanity in going out in search of reality if we already know it; some awareness of our ignorance is necessary; without our faith in the empirical world being jolted, search for the absolute would be as absurd as accepting two absolutes. Metaphysics is therefore implicitly and necessarily evaluative; it is not just searching for an other reality but search for the reality of this reality, the unknown reality, the reality not given in the empirical knowledge.

After the authority or ultimacy of sense experience is rejected the human mind seems to be left to its own resources. Reason cannot accept failure and it tries to comprehend the unconditioned or the transcendent by means of its own concepts and ideas. Speculation is born; extending the use of empirical categories beyond experience is speculation or *a priori* thinking. It is rationalism and is born of the implicit faith in the power of human reason to know the unconditioned, and that is why although it is just speculation or groping, it is mistaken to be knowledge. The edifice of speculative metaphysics topples down as soon as critical thinking reveals that pure thought is purely empty and cannot therefore be equated with knowledge which requires some kind of intuition or immediacy. Pure thought lacks content and lands us in the realm of antinomies.

It is thus obvious that if metaphysics is speculative it is not by accident. After the rejection of sense-experience as the proper means of knowing the unconditioned, there seems to be no other means of knowledge available except pure thought. Success in the realm of mathematics encourages confidence in the competence of pure thought. Plato, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz and all the other rationalists were

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deceived by the success of mathematics in the realm of pure thought. Lured by mathematics and forced by circumstances, metaphysics becomes speculative, rationalistic or *a priori*.

So it is possible to understand how metaphysics necessarily becomes speculative. But that does not mean that it is necessary to accept the validity of the speculative venture. Kant demonstrated that the synthetic *a priori* propositions of metaphysics do not give us knowledge; modern logic shows that the *a priori* propositions of mathematics too should not be mistaken for knowledge as they are not synthetic but only analytic. We therefore accept the positivists' contention that rationalism or pure thinking is non-sense and that speculative metaphysics must go.

II

If speculative metaphysics is pure nonsense, what is the option before us? Shall we bid good-bye to metaphysics, or can we not have some kind of non-speculative metaphysics? The rejection of speculative metaphysics seems to have given rise to three types of reactions in Europe. There are the positivists who propose to bid good-bye to metaphysics once for all; they are actively opposed to all ontologising. But positivism seems to be losing its appeal now. For one thing, it lacks ideology and is completely devoid of any spiritual or cultural content. For another, the attempt to eliminate metaphysics is vitiated by the implicit presence of speculation in positivism itself. It is against the creed of positivism to make any absolute statement and yet it is in terms of absolute statements that its whole position is defined.

The second type of reaction against speculative metaphysics is not to eliminate it but to ignore it. Phenomenology for example does not categorically refute metaphysics; it just keeps hands off metaphysics and proposes (poses?) to present just a non-committal and descriptive account of experience. How far phenomenology succeeds or can succeed in keeping off metaphysics or ontology is a matter of opinion. No wonder that we find today phenomenologists who do not pretend ontological innocence.

The third type of reaction against speculative metaphysics is represented by the votaries of non-speculative or descriptive metaphysics. It is felt that it is neither possible to eliminate metaphysics nor is it proper to ignore it. The positivist appears to pour the child with

the bath in rejecting all metaphysics. He does not see that it is not metaphysics but ontology that should be rejected. Metaphysics we must have; only it should not be speculative ontology; it should be non-speculative or descriptive metaphysics.

Some main features of this new kind of metaphysics may be noted. To begin with, descriptive metaphysics is not interested in any kind of ontology much less in transcendental ontology. It is just a description and no valuation of the structure of the world. Its purpose is to give a coherent conceptual scheme which illumines most of the facts of life and the world. This scheme is not a judgment but only a proposal. Secondly, this brand of metaphysics does not claim finality; it is avowedly tentative, modifiable and replaceable. It is not *the truth*. Finally, descriptive metaphysics does not appear to conflict with any religious or cultural ideology and seems to allow full freedom for religious and ethical attitudes although it would not itself advocate any particular attitude. It is metaphysics which is non-committal and is neither theistic nor atheistic. The traditional metaphysical issues are not even raised much less solved; it is not merely new metaphysics but metaphysics in a new sense. It is difficult to imagine whether this new type of metaphysics can satisfy the aspirations of man, whether it can have any relevance to life and whether one would be a whit worse for not having it. It has neither the appeal of a deductive system nor the worth of a scientific hypothesis. We wonder whether metaphysics of this brand serves any purpose.

Like the votaries of non-speculative metaphysics, certain existentialists too are anxious to eschew all speculative metaphysics. They decry the search for essences and are interested only in what they call existence or human existence. The natural tendency of our mind to ask questions about the ultimate is explained away as some kind of self-deception or bad faith leading to inauthentic existence. Existentialism of this type is not speculative, but unlike descriptive metaphysics, it has to say a good deal about human nature and claims finality for that. All the same, it is doubtful whether this philosophy would like to be stamped as metaphysics.

III

It appears to us that this tendency to react violently and strongly against speculative metaphysics is doubtless healthy and wholesome.

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But this reaction, like every other other reaction, seems to go to another extreme and falls a prey to another disease, and that is the disease of paying an unconscious homage to the empirical. There is in all of them an implicit acceptance of the empirical and no concern for the unconditioned. The reaction lacks the very spirit of metaphysics which is to take us beyond the empirical. These reactions of the various kind seem to keep us confined to the empirical in one way or the other. It looks as if after the rejection of rationalism or *a priori* metaphysics, there is no other option except some type of empiricistic realism. History of thought shows that realism has always been a reaction; all reaction is reaffirmation. Empiricistic realism as a philosophy is a reaffirmation or rehabilitation of our animal faith in the reality of the empirical by rejecting which philosophy begins. Realism is thus a return to what was rejected in the very rise of reflection or philosophic consciousness. This return fails to do justice to the kind of awakening that philosophy is. It may be true that philosophy goes wrong when it goes in the direction of rationalism or *a priori* thinking, but from that it does not follow that the initial rejection of the empirical as conditioned can be withdrawn. Whether the unconditioned is discovered or not, the rejection of the empirical is final. Empiricism or positivism or realism is not the only alternative to rationalism. Instead of thinking that metaphysics falls with the fall of rationalism, it is pertinent and necessary to ask whether some non-speculative metaphysics which is also non-empiricistic is possible or not.

IV

We venture to think that it is possible to answer the above question in the affirmative; it is possible to have some non-speculative metaphysics which does not confine us to the empirical but fulfills the metaphysical aim of taking us to the unconditioned. Consider the Mādhyaṃika. You cannot say that it is not metaphysics; it does make a distinction between the empirical and the transcendent, the *vyāvahārika* and the *pāramārthika*. Nor can you say that it is speculative as it condemns all thought and all speculation; thought as such is found to be fraught with self-contradiction. It aims at silencing thought by realizing its self-contradictory nature. Silence of speech is only incidental to the silence of thought. When thought is silenced, nothing more remains to be done: no positive thought or knowledge is nece-

ssary; because there being no obstruction, there is no need of a positive effort for knowledge. The Mādhyamika is thus a brilliant example of true non-speculative metaphysics.

Advaita Vedānta may be cited as another example of the same type of metaphysics. It is a complete misunderstanding of Vedānta either to think that it depends wholly on *śruti* or to think that it is some kind of speculative system. There is no *a priori* thinking in Vedānta; there is no *a priori* definition of reality or self. There is only an analysis of what is already implicit in experience. Vedānta has to be understood as a kind of sifting knowledge from what is not knowledge in the motley muddle of experience; it is not achieving some new kind of knowledge which is not already there. If we had only knowledge and nothing else mixed up with it the Vedāntic analysis would not be necessary. But since imagination, feeling, etc. are mixed up with knowledge, it becomes necessary to take to analysis. Vedānta does not impose any *a priori* view on us; it only points out that the principle that truth or knowledge is what is not cancelled is already implicit in our experience. After this what remains to be done is to find out that which cannot be cancelled or rejected or that which is presupposed in all cancellation. It turns out that the self and the self alone is what cannot be, by its very nature, cancelled. This self which is the prius of all experience, or the ground of all experience can be detached from its accidents and can be realized in its purity. But this possibility cannot be known by any other means or method except *śruti*. It is here that *śruti* comes in, but it comes in not to impose on us a dogma but to lead us to some immediate experience and that even here and now. Advaitism is therefore neither a speculative or rationalistic system based on reason alone nor a dogmatic theory based on *śruti* alone. It is a method of discovering or uncovering what is already hidden in experience; *śruti* only confirms the discovery.

V

We submit then that metaphysics must be non-speculative, that speculative metaphysics which is based on *a priori* thinking or the extension of empirical categories beyond experience must go. At the same time we do not believe that the so-called non-speculative metaphysics found in the West is the proper substitute for speculative meta-

physics; it is not metaphysics at all, because it has no concern with the Unconditioned. That speculative metaphysics deserves to be thrown away does not mean that our aspiration for the Unconditioned deserves to be thrown away or is at fault. What is at fault is the wrong method and not the goal of metaphysics. The votary of descriptive metaphysics abolishes the very goal of metaphysics and still calls himself metaphysician. The proper thing to be done is to retain the Unconditioned as the goal of metaphysics and to find out a non-speculative method to achieve it. This is what Vedānta and the Madhyamika have done; they give us a truly non-speculative metaphysics.

THE UNSPEAKABLE IN METAPHYSICS‡

Prima facie, the unspeakable should have no place in philosophy. After all, philosophy is not just mute experience but a system of thought and some kind of discourse, and as such it should have nothing to do with the unspeakable. The unspeakable is its own condemnation. There is a patent contradiction in speaking about the unspeakable. The unspeakable introduces mysticism in philosophy, and mysticism and philosophy should not be confused. For philosophy, whatever is knowable must be speakable and again the speakable must also be knowable. If one speaks of something unknowable, one is obviously contradicting oneself. "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent" (Wittgenstein)

In spite of the above *prima facie* case against the unspeakable it seems worthwhile discussing this question for many reasons. For one thing, a dominant school of contemporary thought seems to be primarily concerned with language and what can be expressed in language, and so it seems necessary to go into the question whether everything is speakable or there is something which is beyond language. One cannot tacitly take it for granted that everything must be speakable. Secondly, not only the mystics but also great critical philosophers such as Plato, Kant, Nāgārjuna, Śāṅkara etc. allow a place for the unspeakable in their systems. Unless, we reject them outright as pseudo-philosophers (and that is not a small responsibility) it is necessary to make an attempt to understand the circumstances which force the acceptance of

‡ Presidential Address, Logic & Metaphysics Section, Indian Philosophical Congress, Patna Session, 1969.

the unspeakable. Wittgenstein's advice to remain silent about the unspeakable seems to be rather platitudinous. Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one has got to be silent perforce, and it does not require a prophet to ask us to remain silent whereof one cannot speak. The real question is not whether one should or should not speak about the unspeakable but whether there is or is not something whereof one cannot speak. The question is how one comes to admit the unspeakable; one has to be silent only after recognizing or noticing the unspeakable. Then alone one can say whether the unspeakable is dispensable or indispensable. There is still another reason why the question regarding the unspeakable must be discussed. The acceptance or the non-acceptance of the unspeakable seems to be closely related to a certain conception of philosophy and so the question is not so innocent or so simple as it might appear on the face of it. If we deny the unspeakable we should know what we are denying and whether it is legitimate and necessary to deny it.

I

Let us first of all try to bring out the precise meaning of the unspeakable in philosophy. This is necessary, because the term 'unspeakable' is used in different ways which should be clearly distinguished. The unspeakable is partly like and partly unlike the invisible. The term 'invisible' is used for both what is not and also what *cannot* be seen like sound. But the expression unspeakable is used in philosophy not for what is not spoken but for what cannot be spoken in any language. The expression 'cannot be' itself is understood in different ways. To begin with, in literature when we intend to express something of the highest or superlative degree, we say that it is indescribable. Here the object is tangible and something within experience and imagination, and the difference between the speakable and the unspeakable is a matter of degree and not of kind. Then, there is the psychological meaning of 'cannot be spoken'. When we have an experience which is unanalysable or incommunicable in terms of something else, we say that it is unspeakable. This is so in the case of most intense or most complex or most simple experiences. There is nothing intangible or unknowable here; the difficulty is only regarding analysis which is necessary for communication. Finally, there are the logical and metaphysical meanings of the unspeakable. Although the logical and metaphysical meanings are connected, they should be nonetheless

distinguished. Logically the unspeakable is that which involves some kind of incompatibility. This is illustrated by the Jaina concept of *Avaktavya* and the Advaitin's concept of *anirvacanīya*. The Jainas accept the *avaktavya* because logically the *asti* and the *nāsti* cannot be simultaneously (*sahārpaṇa*) posited or spoken. It is a different matter whether there is or is not something which requires the positing or speaking of *asti* and *nāsti* simultaneously and that at the empirical level. The Jaina metaphysics which requires the concept of *avaktavya* may be questioned, but it cannot be questioned that the *avaktavya* refers to the logical difficulty of simultaneous affirmation and negation.¹ The Advaitin's seem to introduce the concept of *anirvacanīya* for a different reason; it is as a protest against the law of excluded middle, a protest against the view that the *sat* and *asat* are not only exclusive but also exhaustive categories and as such a thing must be either *sat* or *asat*. The Advaitin points out that it is not possible to speak of the false (rope-snake) either as *sat* (as it is cancelled) or as *asat* (as it appears) or as both because that would be contradictory. Hence the false is *anirvacanīya* or unspeakable. The difficulty here again is just logical; the concept of *anirvacanīya* or *sadasad vilakṣaṇa* is not metaphysical but only epistemological or logical. There is no question of transcendence either in the case of the *avaktavya* or the *anirvacanīya*. The unspeakable in the metaphysical sense refers to the transcendent or the Unconditioned such as the *Brahman* of the Advaitins or the *Śūnya* of the Mādhyamikas or the Absolute of Plotinus or the thing-in-itself of Kant. The peculiar feature of the unspeakable in the metaphysical sense is that it is based on a distinction of two levels of reality, the empirical and the transcendent. The transcendent is unspeakable because it transcends all empirical categories or is arrived at by a negation of all empirical forms of speech. The transcendent is not one more reality beside the empirical but something which supersedes or dethrones the empirical. The difference between the absolute and the empirical is not merely of degree but of levels or kind. The transcendent is unspeakable because speech is awakened to its futility in regard to it. It is in this metaphysical sense that we are going to consider the question of the unspeakable here.

II

It would appear that even in metaphysics such entities are admitted as are unspeakable but quite different from the transcendent or

1. See the author's article on *Avaktavya*.

the Absolute. There are, for instance, the *viśeṣas* of the Vaiśeṣikas and the *svalakṣaṇas* of the Buddhists. They too seem to be inherently unspeakable metaphysical entities. Neither the *viśeṣas* nor the *svalakṣaṇas* can be described as A is B; they are so particular and so simple that they can be neither analysed nor classified. The *viśeṣas* are *svatovyāvartaka* or self-distinguishing; they are not distinguished in terms of predicates, and so are the *svalakṣaṇas* with the added characteristic that they are momentary. The question is : how far is it legitimate to accept such metaphysical unspeakables. The Vaiśeṣika argument for the *viśeṣas* is rather tenuous. If something self-distinguishing is to be admitted why not accept as self-distinguishing the substances themselves which the *viśeṣas* are supposed to distinguish? The concept of *viśeṣa* is wholly *a priori*, there is nothing in experience to warrant its supposition. No wonder that later Naiyāyikas find this doctrine redundant. But apart from metaphysical superfluity, there is also a logical difficulty. The question is whether the *viśeṣas* are related to each other or unrelated. If they are related then they cease to be *svatovyāvartaka* or self-distinguishing. If they are not related, then is there not a patent contradiction in admitting a plurality of absolutes or independent entities? The very concept of self-distinction is riddled with difficulties. If A is self-distinguished, then it would be distinct from B, C, D—etc. and all the distinctions will be inherent in it with the result that it would bulge into an infinitely complex entity and cease to be self-distinguished and simple.

The *svalakṣaṇas* of the Buddhists though similar in many respects to the *viśeṣas* stand on a different footing. The Buddhists make a distinction between the empirical (*saṃvṛti*) and the transcendent (*pāramārtika*), a distinction not made by the Vaiśeṣika. The *svalakṣaṇa* is the thing-in-itself as Stcherbatsky puts it. So the *svalakṣaṇa* is unspeakable for two reasons. Firstly, it is absolutely particular or unique and irrepeatable like the *viśeṣas* and secondly, it is transcendent like *Brahman* or *Śūnya* and not an object of empirical knowledge. *Brahman* or *Śūnya* is also unique and irrepeatable and can be regarded as *svalakṣaṇa* or being its own *lakṣaṇa* that is, known only in terms of itself and not in terms of any thing else. Like *Brahman* or *Śūnya*, *svalakṣaṇa* too is beyond all determination or *kalpanā* but while the former is beyond number the *svalakṣaṇas* must be many. So the question is whether number and distinction can be introduced in the sphere of the transcendent. A plurality of the unconditioned seems to be a contradiction in terms.

Rightly therefore the Mādhyamikas criticise the pluralism of the realist Buddhist even as the Advaitins object to Sāṅkhya doctrine of the plurality of *Puruṣas*. The unspeakable or the unconditioned cannot be many; plurality is possible only in the realm of the conditioned. The *viśeṣas* and *svalakṣaṇas* are no doubt unspeakable as they are conceived, but they are metaphysically illegitimate.

If the transcendent cannot be many; much less can it be complex or made up of parts. It should be something like the self-conceived and self-existent substance of Spinoza but not like the Absolute of Hegel or Bradley. The absolute of Hegel and Bradley both is an infinite whole free from incompleteness and inconsistency. But is it really transcendent or unspeakable? Probably not. The reason is that the absolute in both these systems is a synthesis or harmony of finite parts shorn of their incongruity; it is a totality, though not a mere totality but a harmonious one. It has therefore parts and cannot be called unspeakable in the proper sense. There is no real transcendence in the sense that there is no independent whole; the whole depends on parts which are not transcended or rejected but only transformed. This conception of the absolute does not bring out the true nature of the absolute as transcendent and unrelated. The unspeakable in the proper sense refers to the unrelated transcendent.

III

It is obvious that in order to understand the nature of the unspeakable it is necessary to understand the nature of the transcendent; because metaphysically the unspeakable means the transcendent and the transcendent must be unspeakable. The reason is that the transcendent is neither many nor complex. Speech such as A is B means either that A and B are related or that B is the predicate of A. The transcendent, being beyond all duality, cannot be expressed in the form of any proposition; it is unspeakable. The *viśeṣas* are not transcendent; the *svalakṣaṇas* of the Buddhists, though supposedly transcendent, cannot be so because they are many; the absolute of Hegel and Bradley though numerically one is made up of parts.

If the transcendent is absolutely beyond the empirical, it may be asked whether it has any thing to do with the empirical or the conditioned. In answer, we may mention three typical views of which

only one seems to be satisfactory. To begin with, there is the view of Hegel and Bradley. Here the absolute is constituted by the finite and the many; it is their harmonious integration or unity. So here the absolute is really not absolute but dependent on its constituent parts. There is too much of immanence. Real independence can be had only by emphasizing the transcendence of the Absolute, that is, by stressing that the Absolute is not *necessarily* related to the finite and the conditioned; it is free. This is a point not well appreciated in Hegel and Bradley both. If there is too much stress on immanence in Hegel and Bradley, Nāgārjuna seems to err on the side of transcendence. The *Śūnya* of Nāgārjuna is so transcendent that it seems to have nothing to do with the conditioned. This is the second approach to the problem of the relation between the Absolute and the relative. Nāgārjuna takes such an extreme view that he is not prepared to say, at least not explicitly, that the *Śūnya* is the ground or *adhiṣṭhāna* of the relative; he is afraid of succumbing to a *deṣī* which he abhors and criticizes. The trouble in this view is that the *Śūnya* is so removed from the relative, and there is such a wide gulf that it does not touch our life and experience at any point and seems to be no better than mere nothing.

Midway between these two extremes is the view represented by Advaitism. The absolute is neither constituted by the relative nor is it completely cut off from it; it is the very ground of the relative; it is what lends reality to the relative; it is what makes the relative appear as absolute or real. The relation between the two is neither mutual nor non-existent but one-sided; the relative depends on the absolute but the absolute does not in any way depend on the relative. Depending on the absolute the relative is parasitical; the relative gets its nourishment and sustenance from the absolute and thereby succeeds in concealing it. That is why it becomes necessary to reject and negate the relative which covers the very ground where it grows. Transcendence therefore does not mean merely adding something at the top; it means rejection of the relative. The unconditioned can be had only by negating the conditioned; the two cannot be had side by side or simultaneously. When the conditioned is taken as real the absolute is out of sight and when the absolute is known, the conditioned is emptied and its reality drained off, because it is the unconditioned that gives reality to the conditioned. To get at the unconditioned only means being deconditioned and not being in possession of another

reality over and above the conditioned. Advaitism therefore emphasizes both the immanence and transcendence of *Brahman* equally. As the ground of the universe *Brahman* is immanent; it is our very self, our true self. As completely free from all duality, *Brahman* is equally transcendent. But for immanence we could have no contact with *Brahman* and but for transcendence, *Brahman* could not be absolute or free from all imperfections; could not be our goal. In one case we could not realize *Brahman* and in the other case, we would not care to realize it. *Brahman* as transcendent is unspeakable and even utterly unspeakable but *Brahman* is for that reason not unknowable since *Brahman* as immanent is our very self which is present there in all states and which cannot be denied in any way what so ever.

IV

Although the Advaitic conception of the Unconditioned seems to be most appropriate, it does not follow that there is only one way of arriving at it. There is the Kantian way which consists in showing that all our knowledge is conditioned by the forms of intuition and the categories of the understanding. The unconditioned or the thing-in-itself is beyond these conditions of knowledge. Kant has been criticized for talking about the thing-in-itself which is supposedly beyond all knowledge. The Hegelians point out that the admission of an unknown and unknowable thing-in-itself is on the one hand a patent self-contradiction and on the other it leads to agnosticism. In order to get rid of the difficulty, it is suggested that the thing-in-itself be regarded as a mere concept or a category and not as something beyond all categories. It may be pointed out here that Hegel seems to have missed the whole point of the Kantian analysis. He fails to see that if the thing-in-itself were just a category, it would cease to be the ground of knowledge or the thing-in-itself. If it be argued that there is no need of accepting something as the ground of knowledge, our answer would be that if no ground of knowledge is admitted, then no distinction can be made between perception and thought or knowledge and imagination. It is the thing-in-itself that prevents thought from being empty or gives content to it. No wonder that Hegel is not able to distinguish between the form (thought) and matter (intuition) of knowledge. For Hegel mere consistency is truth, because there is nothing else except thought. For the same reason Hegel is not able to make a distinction between cancellation and mere contradiction.

Thought is formal and is governed by the formal law of contradiction and gives only validity or consistency. Immediate experience or intuition gives content to thought and enables us to distinguish between knowledge and imagination. The falsity of the snake depends not on any contradiction but on immediate experience. The thing-in-itself is accepted just to make intuition possible; it is not to be taken as a dark hurdle to the omniscience of thought. But for the thing-in-itself, thought itself would become the thing and there would be no scope for falsity. When Kant says that the thing-in-itself is unknowable what he means is that it cannot be known in the manner in which a particular thing or the conditioned is known; it can certainly be known as the ground of the conditioned. It is known as unknown and so it is speakable as unspeakable, and not literally speakable.

The phrase 'speakable as unspeakable' reminds us of a certain error which contemporary positivists seem to share with Hegel. It is implicitly assumed that all speech as also all thought is literal. Speech and thought of empirical objects are no doubt literal. But just as speech is sometimes not literal so thought also is sometimes only symbolic and not literal. The reason is that ordinary speech-forms and thought-forms correspond to empirical objects and so when the same speech forms and thought-forms are employed in the context of the non-empirical or the transcendent, they become necessarily symbolic; the form is empirical, but the content is non-empirical. This is what deceives the positivists who expect even metaphysical propositions to have the same kind of meaning which empirical propositions have. So really speaking, it is the positivist who is deceived by the form of metaphysical propositions and not the metaphysicians. When the unspeakable is spoken, the positivist like Hegel sees a contradiction, because he does not see the distinction between the literally spoken and merely spoken.

The phrase 'known as unknown' like the phrase 'speakable as unspeakable' must be explained in order to show that there is no contradiction in Kant's thesis that the thing-in-itself is unknown. The idea that something can be known as unknown is not quite common specially in the parlance of western thought. An analysis of perceptual experience reveals that all perception implies the paradox of known unknownness. When I see a table, do I believe that the table comes into existence along with my perception of it? Perception and its object

cannot be simultaneous, otherwise they cannot be distinguished; the object must be prior. Even a Berkeley would not say that seeing brings things into existence. Berkeley said only that the essence of a thing and not its existence consists in being perceived, that is, there is nothing hidden like an inner core; all that is in a thing is there on the surface, there is no depth. So when a thing is perceived, it must be-as we naturally believe-already there in order to be perceived. If so, the question arises: how do we come to know or believe even before perception that the thing was there? One has got to admit here some kind of known unknownness of the thing; before an object is known, it must be known as unknown. This point is better brought out if we refer to our experience of illusion and its cancellation. We first see a snake, and when light is brought in, we find a rope there. When we see the snake, we do not know the rope, but is the rope there or not even when it is not seen? Do we not realize that even when we saw only a snake, the rope was there or rather that it was the rope itself that appeared as snake. That is to say, we admit the existence of the rope even when it was not known; the rope is known as unknown. The thing-in-itself of Kant can be in the same manner said to be known as unknown without any anomaly or contradiction.

Another way of discovering the transcendent or the unspeakable is given by the Mādhyamika. This method does not consist in establishing the conditioned nature of all knowledge; it establishes the contradictory nature of all thought or so-called knowledge. The *tattva* cannot be contradictory and so it must be transcendent to thought which is inherently and necessarily contradictory. The antinomical nature of thought was accepted by Hegel too, but he dogmatically imagined that thought could somehow heal itself or its contradictions in the Absolute and so it was not necessary to go beyond thought; there is therefore no real transcendence in Hegel. Bradley seems to have a better insight when he suggests that it is only in somekind of immediacy that the essential duality of thought could be overcome, but the trouble with Bradley as with Hegel is that the world or appearance is too much with him: he thinks that the Absolute will be shorn of content without the appearances. But the Mādhyamika deliberately calls the *tattva*, *śūnya* or devoid of appearance, only to emphasize that though the Absolute is beyond the relative, it is not nothing. To be beyond speech which is fraught with contradiction is not to be nothing. Silence itself is a state of speech; silence is not dumbness.

A third way of getting at the unspeakable or the unconditioned is found in Advaitism. The method adopted here is the method of negating all duality (*advaita*). The *tattva* being beyond all duality is for that very reason beyond all speech too; there can be no speech in the realm of pure identity. The subject—object duality is the most basic and primordial; all other dualities are derivative. Speech, like love, seems to presuppose duality but the very purpose of speech as also of love is defeated if there is real duality; communication requires communion too. The greater the communion or identity is achieved, the greater is the success of speech. The point is that what is completely different or other cannot be known much less communicated. Only the self can be truly known; all objective knowledge i. e. empirical knowledge is pseudo-knowledge, and so speech based on duality does not give real knowledge. Speech is really communicative when it transcends its duality and refers to pure identity or self; and there speech attains silence; we reach the unspeakable. *Brahman* is unspeakable not because it is unknown nor because it is nothing, but because it is transcendent, beyond all duality. The unspeakable in Advaitism refers to the pure identity implicit in all duality. This brings us to another feature of the unspeakable in Advaitism. *Brahman* is unspeakable not only because it is transcendent but also because it is the light of all light; it is self-evident. Speech reveals or makes evident what is not evident by itself. But language itself not being self-luminous requires some other light to illumine it and that light is the light of *Brahman*. So that which illumines language cannot itself be the object of language. Speech is evident but *Brahman* is self-evident (*svayam-prakāśa*) and unspeakable. As self-evident *Brahman* is immanent in all that is evident. So that we can now say that, *Brahman* is unspeakable both because it is transcendent as well as immanent. If at all, speech can be relevant to *Brahman* only negatively; even the so-called *svarūpa-lakṣaṇas* are understood only negatively. *Brahman* can be spoken only as unspeakable.

V

The short review given above of the three ways of arriving at the unspeakable is meant to bring out and emphasize one point, namely, that the unspeakable or the transcendent cannot be had (and is even meaningless) without negation or rejection. It is this feature, the feature of negating appearance or the conditioned that is common to

all the different ways of reaching the unconditioned. Kant rejects all empirical knowledge as mediated by forms of intuition and the understanding, the Mādhyamika rejects all thought as full of contradiction, and the Advaitin rejects all duality as derivative or dependent and hence false. In order to be able to appreciate the nature and significance of the unconditioned or the unspeakable, it is necessary to understand the role of negation in philosophy. The emergence of philosophic consciousness which means an earnest *jijñāsā* or search for truth, implies an incipient negation of what we already know as true. So long as we take empirical knowledge and experience as true, there is no earthly reason why we should go in search of truth. Philosophy is not mere extension of knowledge in the sense in which science is. It does not extend our existing knowledge of things; it rather rejects and replaces our knowledge and that for the simple reason that our present knowledge is found useless not for our day to day life but for the purpose of enabling us to attain the highest goal of life, namely, eternal and infinite happiness. The positivists therefore are quite right when they say—though they say it with a different motive—that philosophy does not extend the boundaries of our knowledge of the world. Philosophy not only does not but even cannot extend our empirical knowledge because it starts by rejecting that. In fact if philosophy did not reject empirical knowledge, there would be no justification for philosophy to appear on the scene. Either philosophy is utterly useless as it does not serve any empirical purpose, (it even confuses the empirical issues), or there must be a non-empirical purpose for which philosophy is relevant. To be able to adhere to the non-empirical goal, philosophy must negate the empirical. Philosophy is negation. Even the positivist negates; he negates the transcendent. But how does he get the idea of the transcendent? He gets it by negating the empirical. So the basic or primary negation is the negation of the empirical. Either the empirical is not even questioned or it is reaffirmed. In one case one is at the level of the unreflective animal; in the other case one is a positivist. But in both cases, one takes the empirical itself as absolute. So the absolute is never to be got rid of; the only question is whether we choose to accept the empirical itself as absolute or we choose to go forward to seek the real absolute. Since the empirical is full of relativity and contradiction, it cannot be taken as unconditioned or absolute. Metaphysics must reject the empirical and those who hug the empirical must reject metaphysics.

Negation as a necessary feature of all metaphysics enables us to distinguish the unspeakable of the metaphysician from the unspeakable of the mystic. For the mystic, the unspeakable is mute experience, an experience which can neither be translated in terms of another experience nor can it be literally described. The mystic has to take recourse to superlatives, paradoxes, and symbolism as devices to speak the unspeakable. But the metaphysician's approach being critical from the outset, the unspeakable is discovered after negating the speakable or the empirical. For the positivist it is not only that the empirical is speakable but also that the speakable is empirical. The unspeakable being non-empirical is for him pure non-sense. For the metaphysician the unspeakable is significant because the empirical cannot be ultimate.

Our emphasis on negation distinguishes our position from that of some brother metaphysicians. When we say that metaphysics is concerned with the transcendent and that the transcendent is unspeakable, we are aware that there are metaphysicians who are either not absolutists or who so conceive the absolute that it cannot be really regarded as unspeakable. Realists as pluralists are generally not absolutists. Rāmānuja tries to synthesise realism with absolutism, but his absolute is really not absolute or transcendent. In fact he seems to waver between absolute as a totality and absolute as the self of the universe. Realists cannot be absolutists while metaphysicians who accept some kind of determinate (*saguṇa*) absolute do not see the force of the argument that all determination is negation. In either case metaphysics is not well-conceived. The logic of negation with which metaphysics starts must go the whole hog and cannot rest until it reaches the pure transcendent or the indeterminate or the unspeakable. It is interesting to note that Rāmānuja agrees that *Brahman* is unspeakable yet he takes the expression unspeakable in a literary sense rather than in the really metaphysical sense; it means for him only something of the superlative order.

Conclusion

In this short paper on the unspeakable, our aim has been threefold. To begin with, we want to insist that the very emergence of metaphysics is rooted in some kind of negation howsoever implicit. In fact metaphysics may be considered as reflection or negation, and not

a positive speculation concerning reality. Metaphysics so conceived is necessarily concerned with the Unconditioned or what cannot be negated or the unspeakable. Secondly, it has been shown that the unspeakable in metaphysics does not refer to anything mysterious but only to the transcendent. There is no contradiction in talking about the transcendent as the unspeakable, because what the term suggests is not that we are forbidden to say anything, but that there is a different mode of knowing the Transcendent, different from that of knowing the empirical. Finally, we claim that this view of metaphysics and hence of the absolute disarms the positivist whose range is only within the speakable or rather the literally speakable. The unspeakable or the transcendent is beyond the purview of the positivist and metaphysics as concerned with the transcendent remains unaffected by the onslaughts of the positivists criticism. The positivist on account of his empiricistic obsessions is simply out of court. There neither is nor can there be any communication between the positivist and the metaphysician; they talk two languages or rather, they make two very different uses of language. The metaphysician uses language to go beyond language while the positivist uses language to tie himself to the empirical.

THE PROBLEM OF METHOD IN PHILOSOPHY[‡]

The contemporary scene in Philosophy would appear to an observer from outside, rather bizzare and bewildering. There seems to be a kind of anarchy prevailing in the sphere of philosophy today. The erstwhile Queen of sciences does not look today even like a discipline, much less a spiritual discipline. There seem to be no rules of the game : there seems to be neither a direction nor a goal. Every player is playing the game in his own way. What is more surprising is that even after centuries of cultivation, philosophy is asking all kinds of questions about itself today. It is called upon to explain its function, to declare its programme, to justify its existence and to demonstrate its validity. Indeed, philosophy appears to be in the dock and seems to be having a rather precarious existence.

To a philosopher, however, all this would not appear to be unusual or unnatural and deplorable. For one thing, philosophy is easily the most self-conscious intellectual activity of man. Naturally therefore the philosopher, instead of positively philosophising, asks questions regarding the nature of philosophy, its goal and its method. In fact, this itself is part of philosophising. These questions are not extra-philosophical questions but questions that arise from within philosophy and are essentially philosophical. To be sure, there seems to be an inner dialectic always operating in philosophy and forcing it to have some kind of stock-taking or self-examination from time to time. This has happened in the past also and has proved wholesome.

It seems to us that the chaotic condition prevailing in western philosophy today is mainly due to one reason. The European thinker

[‡] Printed in Indian Philosophical Annual, C. A. S. P. (Madras University), 1968.

is not yet clear as to what kind of knowledge philosophy is expected to give. Does philosophy extend the frontiers of knowledge like science? If so, how does it do that? If not, what does philosophy do? So the question regarding the method of philosophy is really the question whether philosophy gives any useful knowledge or any knowledge at that. It is thus obvious that the problem of method in philosophy is closely linked up with the problem of its worthwhileness and value. In this connection, it is possible to generalise that a particular method of philosophy is correlated to a certain ideal of knowledge which in its turn is related to the kind of value attached to philosophy.

In the west, there seem to be broadly speaking, two ideals of knowledge between which western philosophy has been oscillating down the ages, sometimes leaning to the one and then swinging to the other producing scepticism in the process. The two ideals are represented by mathematics on the one hand and positive sciences on the other. Right from the time of Pythagoras down to Bradley and Whitehead, it is mathematics that seems to have furnished the ideal of knowledge for the great speculative philosophers of the west. However, there has also been a line of thinkers who have revolted against the high *a priori* method and who have tried to replace the mathematical ideal by the ideal of scientific knowledge. The see-saw between rationalism and scientism or empiricism, as we may briefly describe them, continues even today.

II

There is no doubt that mathematics has something very attractive about it. In mathematics, propositions are universal and necessary; there is no scope for difference of opinion or individualism. Personal whims and fancies find no place in mathematics. It is in mathematics that we find a well knit system in which the different propositions are coherently and logically related; it is a perfectly deductive system. Finally, mathematics (and this is its most important and attractive feature) is wholly *a priori*, it depends wholly on reason and not on experience. From all this, the western thinker seems to have drawn two conclusions. Firstly, the human intellect is independently capable of universal and necessary knowledge. Secondly, if philosophy aspires to give universal and necessary knowledge, it must follow the *a priori* method of mathematics. Plato the father of western philosophy

regarded proficiency in mathematics as a necessary condition or qualification for training in philosophy. Descartes the father of modern philosophy was a mathematician. Spinoza, a close follower of his, went to the length of saying that truth would have remained "hidden to human race for all eternity, if mathematics had not furnished another standard of verity in considering solely the essence and property of figures without regard to their final causes". (*Ethics*, Appendix to Part I). Like Descartes and Spinoza, Leibnitz too regarded mathematics as the paragon of all science; in fact apriorism reaches its peak in his philosophy. All knowledge seems to be innate and there is no need of experience or intuition. In spite of the Kantian criticism against apriorism, the story is repeated in the philosophy of Hegel where reason is not only one with knowledge but also with reality.

Philosophy follows the high *a priori* method of mathematics with the ambition of achieving universal and necessary knowledge and with the hope of ending all controversies and conflicts. But the result seems to have been quite the reverse; innumerable *a priori* speculative systems each claiming final truth have come into existence. Verily apriorism has defeated its own purpose. This alone ought to have been an effective self-condemnation of rationalism. But it has not been, and so time and again criticism and empiricism alike have had to raise their voice in protest against 'armchair-philosophy' or the ambitious *a priori* method. Aristotle protested against Plato and insisted on the role of experience in knowledge. Modern empiricists started by refuting the doctrine of innate ideas, and Kant exploded the superstition of the rationalists by pointing out the antinomies in which one is involved while extending the categories beyond experience with the hope of comprehending the unconditioned. Contemporary positivists refute rationalism by means of their doctrine of meaning or verifiability.

In spite of these repeated and varied attacks, the shadow of rationalism did not and does not leave philosophy and this for certain reasons. Firstly in all these criticisms of rationalism, there seems to have been some lacuna or other. Aristotle and Locke were themselves rationalists, to a certain extent at least. Kant denied the validity of metaphysical propositions but admitted the possibility of *a priori* synthetic propositions in mathematics and science. Contemporary positivists go further and deny *a priori* synthetic propositions even in

mathematics and science, but as their denial is based on a dogmatic theory of meaning, it is not effective. The other reason why rationalism persists in the west is that if rationalism is abandoned, there occurs a vacuum which is not filled by anything better. The only alternative to rationalism is empiricism which seems to be worse. The only useful purpose which positivism has served is to insist that if philosophy claims to give us knowledge it must have the support of experience or else it is meaningless.

III

As pointed out above, being disillusioned about the pretensions of the rationalist, the western thinker has no other option before him but to take science as the ideal of knowledge. Scientific knowledge has attractions of its own and is no less charming than mathematics. Firstly, it is verifiable knowledge, it is open to all and there is no mystery about it. Science is progressive and does not swear by finality; it is at all stages receptive to correction and change. And finally, scientific knowledge is useful knowledge; science along with technology promises to materialise the dream of bringing the kingdom of Heaven to earth. In contrast, metaphysical propositions are unverifiable; they claim finality and seem to be quite useless and unnecessary so far as life is concerned. The world would not be the poorer for banishing metaphysics. The only worthwhile knowledge seems to be science and so the only proper method of knowledge is the scientific method. What cannot be had by scientific methods is not knowledge.

It is thus that the vacuum created by the rejection of rationalism is filled by scientism. All the same the western thinker does not seem to feel happy; there is something that makes him feel uneasy. Science has shortcomings peculiar to it; being utterly objective, it ignores the human soul and its aspirations; it lacks idealism and provides nothing to sustain the cultural life of man. In fact, the pursuit of science regardless of spiritual values seems to have brought humanity to the brink of doom and destruction. Rationalism is bad but the overthrow of rationalism seems to have been worse. Rationalism had at least some spirit and was concerned with the unconditioned, but scientism is lifeless and is not even concerned with the unconditioned. The pendulum therefore seems to be once more swinging back to some form of rationalism. This is how the west goes on oscillating between

rationalism and scientism ; the whole of western philosophy may be regarded as a record of the oscillation of the human mind between rationalist apriorism and empiricistic scientism.

IV

Centuries of cultivation have by now fully brought out the weaknesses of both rationalism and scientism. Rational speculation is empty and unverifiable. Pure reason cannot take us beyond mere concepts ; it lands us in conflicts and antinomies. Empiricism, on the other hand, is tentative and hazardous ; it is limited in scope and sceptical in tendency ; it suffers from spiritual poverty and is indifferent to the inner aspirations of man. In spite of all this, the western thinker finds that he has no other choice. This narrowing down of choice to these two approaches seems to be, according to us, primarily due to two basic fads or fallacies from which the west as a whole suffers.

Firstly, there is the craze that philosophy must be autonomous ; it is a free rational enquiry and so it cannot accept anything from outside reason. This is a false kind of idealism because it is accepted without a criticism of the powers and limits of human reason ; it is blind faith in the capacities of reason. Before raising the banner of the autonomy of reason, it must be enquired as to what reason can know or cannot know. Human intellect is neither a storehouse of all knowledge as conceived by Plato nor a source of the first principles as imagined by Descartes and other rationalists, nor one with reality itself as assumed by Hegel. All these are pre-critical assumptions rooted in the rationalist faith in the power of reason. Reason is merely formal and is therefore empty without some intuition which gives content ; this is the limit of reason. It is therefore absurd to say that to discover the limit of reason is to go beyond that limit. To discover a limit to reason is nothing but to appreciate the need for some external help. To realize that pure reason cannot tell us whether there is a needle in the next room is to appreciate the need of perception. Similarly, if it is found out that reason cannot take us to the transcendent, then it would be sheer obstinacy, fanaticism and lack of humility not to listen to revelation which claims to give us a knowledge of the transcendent. After all, philosophy is not a mere worship of reason but an earnest search for truth ; it is an existential concern,

because our happiness which depends on truth is at stake here. The western thinker fails to appreciate the spirit of philosophy when he proposes to return to empiricism after the fall of rationalism. He does not see that philosophy arises in the wake of our discovery that the empirical cannot be ultimate and so a return to the empirical is ruled out once for ever whether rationalism succeeds or fails. If rationalism fails we should turn to some other source and try that rather than come back to what has been thrown away, namely, the empirical. In the language of the Vedāntins, one cannot take what has once been vomitted (the empirical) however miserably one has failed in searching for food (truth).

The other fallacy of western thought seems to be an assumption that philosophy extends our knowledge of things. Reflection on the nature of philosophy would show that philosophy is not an objective mode of consciousness but a reflection on objective modes of consciousness and as such it cannot add to the stock of objective knowledge. The philosopher does not have a sixth sense; he too has the same resources of knowledge which every one else has. He cannot therefore know something which is not already accessible to us all. He can only examine our common experience and make us aware of what is hidden or implicit. Critical analysis of experience (and not linguistic analysis) is the main function of the philosopher; he can only disentangle and distinguish, and make explicit what is implicit in experience. There is therefore no question regarding a special method of knowledge for philosophy. It is only when philosophy is regarded as a kind of objective knowledge that the questions regarding method and proof arise.

V

In India neither mathematics nor science is the ideal of knowledge; neither reason is extolled above sense-experience nor is sense-experience extolled above reason. There is no system of philosophy which may be called rationalist in the western sense of the term; there is none that regards reason as the source of metaphysical knowledge. Similarly there is no such thing as pure empiricism in India. Cārvāka alone tries to approximate to the empiricistic ideal, but he has never been taken seriously. There has been no such thing as the conflict of rationalism and empiricism here. Nor do we have here the dogmatic

idealism regarding the autonomy of philosophy, because philosophy here is not an exclusive worship of reason but a complete search for truth; the search is completed by passing on from reason to revelation. Reason therefore is not discarded but disciplined, that is, it is kept within its limits. Reason is only formal and can be helpful only in achieving consistency; unaided it can give us neither science nor philosophy. For science reason gets data from sense experience, and for philosophy it requires the aid of revelation. All the spiritual systems of Indian philosophy accept the indispensability of *śruti*. Jainism and Buddhism reject the Vedas but cannot dispense with the words of their prophets. The reason is that a categorical assurance about the transcendent can be had only from *śruti* or the words of one who has had experience. Reason can at best indicate the possibility but cannot categorically assert the existence or reality of the transcendent. To accept *śruti* is to accept the fact that the transcendent is known and knowable.

The acceptance of *śruti* is no doubt a matter of faith, because the validity of *śruti* cannot be demonstrated by any other means of knowledge; *śruti* has to be accepted just because all other sources fail to give us the transcendent. But it must be pointed out that the acceptance of *śruti* in philosophy is only initial and not final; the culmination of philosophy is in intuition. In fact, the acceptance of *śruti* means implicitly the acceptance of the possibility of experiencing what *śruti* conveys; because *śruti* is itself some one's experience. So faith here is not mere faith but the beginning of knowledge. This is the secret of the doctrine of *jīvanmukti*; truth revealed by *śruti* can be experienced even in this life, here and now and does not remain purely a matter of faith in the present life. Acceptance of *śruti* is therefore not dogmatism. Without accepting *śruti* philosophy will be empty speculation; without reason *śruti* cannot be properly understood and without experience (*anubhūti*) philosophy will not be knowledge but mere faith. So in India we have a synthesis of *śruti*, *yukti* and *anubhūti*.

It has been said above that philosophy is not an objective mode of consciousness; it is critical and reflective and therefore cannot be expected to add to our objective knowledge. This view would seem to come in conflict with the *pramāṇa-vāda* of Indian philosophy. Do the *pramāṇas* not give objective knowledge? It is true that *pramāṇas*

other than *śruti* have been accepted by the different systems. But it may be pointed out that philosophically, only *śruti* is important; no other *pramāṇa* is really concerned with the transcendent and only with the transcendent. All other *pramāṇas* are only *laukika* or *vyāvahārika*. The absolutistic systems like Advaitism and the Mādhyamika do not attach much importance to other *pramāṇas*; only realist systems which are philosophically not reflective and critical, attach importance to other *pramāṇas*. They do not realize that if the *pramāṇas* were to determine a philosophy, how could we settle questions about *pramāṇas* themselves, questions such as those regarding the number and nature of *pramāṇas*, their relative importance and their scope. Questions concerning *pramāṇas* cannot themselves be answered by *pramāṇas* and so the *pramāṇas* cannot be ultimate. The *pramāṇas* themselves need the support of a philosophy. Moreover, as already noted, all other *pramāṇas* are necessarily limited to sense-experience; if they are extended beyond experience, they give only possibility and not reality. The case of *śruti* is different; it cannot be dispensed with as *śruti* alone gives us the message of the transcendent, and it tells us only of the transcendent and nothing else, and so it has no other importance except the philosophical. Moreover, *śruti* being based on experience gives us reality and not mere possibility.

We conclude then that the plague of positivism is an inevitable reaction against rationalistic apriorism and will persist so long as philosophy continues to be pure speculation in the name of autonomy, and the conflict between rationalism and empiricism will breed scepticism and encourage materialism in the process. Rationalism and empiricism both miss the point that philosophy is not an extension of objective knowledge and so neither the scientific ideal nor the mathematical ideal of knowledge can be accepted in philosophy. Empiricism has to rise above the animal faith in the reality of the empirical world, while rationalism has to give up the natural disposition of the human mind to believe that it can comprehend the unconditioned. Empiricism has to be critical and criticism has to be receptive; it has to listen to *śruti*. This listening to *śruti* is not dogmatism as it is neither blind nor final; the acceptance of *śruti* permits criticism but not scepticism; it begins with faith but ends in experience. Philosophy is listening to *śruti* critically; it is directed reflection and not wayward thinking or speculation.

WHITHER PHILOSOPHY TODAY ?†

It is obviously not possible to go into any details of this question. We shall therefore be content to indicate in brief as to what was philosophy in the past, what it is today and our estimate of the situation. Needless to say that we are referring mainly to European Philosophy.

There was a time when philosophy was literally 'love of wisdom'. It was love in the sense that it was capable of making men mad and indifferent to the concerns of this life. Wisdom was the search for being or the permanent, that is, it arose after one had taken leave of or renounced the impermanent. It was therefore not merely a way of thinking but also a way of life. The other characteristic of philosophy in this period, namely, the Greek period, was that it did not depend upon any scriptures; it was *a priori* in its approach. Though *a priori* it had close contact with life as it was born of a spiritual awakening, i. e. disillusionment about the world of becoming.

When philosophy enters its second phase in the medieval or the christian period, it becomes the handmaid of theology. It is no more an independent *a priori* search for Reality; it depends on scripture, and that is what maintains its spiritual character in this period. Though philosophy was a hand-maid, it did assert its independence in all sorts of ways, giving rise to the problems of the conflict between reason and faith, of will and intellect and so on. When theology failed to supply the necessary vitality, philosophy degenerated into mere scholasticism which was followed by the Renaissance.

† Extension Lecture at B. H. U., 1963.

In the modern period beginning from Descartes, philosophy is characterised by its complete independence of theology. The problem was not to provide apologetics for truths already revealed in the scriptures but to make it a perfect science based on first principles unassailable by doubt; its ideal was mathematics and its achievements were purely *a priori* deductive systems. In being *a priori* and independent of scripture modern philosophy was like Greek philosophy, but unlike the Greeks modern philosophers were only academic; philosophy not being born of the spiritual disillusionment (except in the case of Spinoza) was not a way of life. Russell criticizes Descartes and Leibnitz for being insincere.

The *a priori* method of philosophizing went on till it received a set back by the critical philosophy of Kant. The *a priori* method implies the belief that the human mind is capable of knowing reality independently of any experience, and this gives a kind of superiority to philosophy. Kant demonstrated that the human mind is capable of having *a priori* forms and categories i. e. it could have *a priori* synthetic propositions, but they were valid only in the sphere of mathematics and science i. e. in the realm of the empirical. There could be no *a priori* synthetic propositions in metaphysics; the thing-in-itself or the unconditioned could neither be known empirically nor *a priori*, and if one did try to say anything about it one would be involved in all sorts of antinomies. Thus although *a priori* metaphysics was doomed, the possibility of the synthetic *a priori* propositions was still accepted at least in science and mathematics.

The post-Kantians felt that the doom of metaphysics was only due to the acceptance of the thing-in-itself. Therefore they decided to declare that there was no such thing as the thing-in-itself and that this was only a concept. The result was that the scope of the synthetic *a priori* propositions was extended to metaphysics and deductive metaphysics was revived. Grand systems were produced. Of these Hegel's was easily the grandest and it exercised tremendous influence. Once again apriorism came to dominate and that till the end of 19th century.

Protest against the *a priori* method started with the founder of the British school of Empiricism, John Locke, and continued even after Kant. But empiricism could not successfully refute Hegelianism on

purely logical grounds. A new logic was necessary for the purpose. This new logic first came in the sphere of mathematics. The revolutionary discovery was that synthetic *a priori* propositions are not found even in Mathematics and Physics. Kant wrongly thought that there could be no geometry except the Euclidean, no logic except the Aristotelian and no physics except the Newtonian. All these assumptions have been now exploded and along with them the belief in the possibility of *a priori* synthetic propositions. Hegelianism is now met on its own grounds i. e. the grounds of logic, and the great thinkers who were once Hegelians (Moore, Russell, James etc.) turned rebels against Hegelianism, that is, rebels against the *a priori* method of philosophy, so that contemporary philosophy may be generally regarded as many faced-reaction against the apriorism of philosophy in general and against Hegelianism of all sorts in particular. The state of philosophy today is therefore such that it can neither depend on scripture nor on synthetic *a priori* propositions; it has neither a superior method of knowing nor a superior object of knowledge; it is therefore necessarily confined to common experience or to empirical sciences.

Contemporary reactions against *a priori* system-building or speculative deductive metaphysics are of many forms, but they can be broadly classified under two heads, namely, scientism and existentialism. Under the first, to begin with, there are the realists who rebel against the idealistic dogma of Hegelianism that the essence of reality is in being known or that reality is not independent of knowledge. Then there are the pragmatists who protest against the morbid abstractness of Hegelianism. Finally the logical positivists who reject the *a priori* synthetic propositions declare all propositions that are neither *a priori* (that is analytic) nor factual to be meaningless. As is obvious all these are different ways of attacking speculative metaphysics or the *a priori* method of knowing. Positively all this boils down to the acceptance of the empirical or scientific knowledge as the only kind of knowledge possible.

But if the empirical world is the only reality and empirical knowledge the only knowledge possible, then we are already in possession of it; what is the need of philosophy ? In answer it is said that the function of philosophy is only to disillusion us about propositions that seem to be apparently factual but really they are not ; in other words, the function of philosophy is merely to achieve greater

clarity by eliminating pseudo-propositions. The method employed is somekind of analysis or reduction. For instance 'all men are mortal' seems to be an informative proposition like 'this man is tall'. But really it is not; while 'this man is tall' is existential the proposition that all men are mortal is not existential but only hypothetical; it says nothing about the existence of man. It means merely that if there are men they are mortal. The net result of the application of the reduction method is that metaphysical propositions are found meaningless and philosophy is reduced to a mere method without any content. Philosophy comes to have nothing to do with the concrete problems of life. It ceases to make any contribution regarding our moral, cultural and spiritual life. "Ever since the end of Middle Ages, philosophy has steadily declined in social and political importance". Russell.

It is not possible to enter upon a critical examination of the theoretical basis of the above view but we may mention two claims that are made by the protagonists of this view. Firstly it is held that, philosophy has always been like this, a mere method of analysis directly or indirectly. Plato and Śankara were doing nothing but analysis albeit unconsciously. The other claim made is that philosophy in this sense is neither spiritual nor materialistic as spiritualism and materialism are both metaphysical i. e., meaningless. Both these claims seem to be untenable. The first claim is obviously a travesty of truth. It is true that in the past also philosophy was concerned with analysis but that was done in the interest of discovering the trans-empirical truth. It did not start with a prejudice against the transcendent but with a faith in the possibility of knowing it. Such truth was not only investigated but even found and realised, as is obvious from the lives of Śankara and others. The testimony of such great geniuses as Plato, Plotinus and Śankara who staked their all for the realisation of the absolute truth cannot be set aside easily. Nor can we admit that the present view of philosophy is innocent; it is not noncommittal; the very rejection of the trans-empirical is the basis of all kinds of materialism. It may not have a positive materialistic metaphysics but it does encourage the materialistic outlook of life. We must not forget that Hume who is looked upon as the great prophet of this school wrote as follows :

"If we take in our hand any volume of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance, let us ask, Does it contain any abstract

reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to flames; for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion''. Modern scientism as it can broadly be called comes to this inevitable end.

The other type of reaction against the old *a priori* philosophy or system-building is Existentialism. Unlike scientism, Existentialism is not interested in establishing a school of thought; it is against settling down to any fixed formula or abstract thinking. Traditional philosophy has been abstract, academic and remote from life; existentialism draws our attention to the life and experience of the individual. Philosophy must take its start from the concrete living self of man. The emphasis should be on the primary nature of human existence; man as choosing and deciding, committing himself or taking a risk, aspiring to go beyond himself or just wandering and looking agape. It is obvious that this characteristic of existentialism goes not only against traditional philosophy and against traditional religion but also against the above mentioned scientism i.e. against everything that distracts us from concrete life and existence. Existentialism seems to be sure of two things: that there can be no fixed and universal answer to the problems of man and that mere intellect cannot give the answer. Existence is to be lived and not merely to be thought; it is our will and feelings rather than our intellect that give us our individuality, and philosophical systems like Procrustean beds chop off this individuality. Man has to achieve his authentic existence and every thing that distracts him is to be set aside.

Freedom is the most primary fact about man; it is this that makes him an individual. He has to make a choice and take a decision at every step; every act commits him; every act is a risk as he does not know where he is drifting. In this act of choosing man stands all alone; none can enter his inmost being or help him; like a tragic hero he feels a kind of deep loneliness. The tragedy of his life is that he feels torn between the ideal and the actual; he aspires to transcend himself and become God. He feels an anguish and a concern which cannot be compared to anything that we feel on the surface of life. Apart from the feeling of risk and loneliness, there is the fact of death which only intensifies the inner life. How is man to face this fact? How is he to adjust himself to the inevitability of death? It is here that man has to make his greatest decision, i.e., the decision about God. He can restore

his peace, freedom from conflict either by completely accepting God or by completely rejecting Him. The two masters of Existentialism, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche adopt the above two attitudes respectively. For Kierkegaard man's restoration from self-alienation is possible only when he accepts the God-man (Christ) paradox, otherwise absolute nothingness yawns before him. For Nietzsche man can be man only when he rejects God, regards Him as dead. For the former faith is "the paradoxical relation to the paradoxical" and for the latter faith "means not wanting to know what is true". It appears that belief and disbelief both could relieve man of his inner tension, (so existentialism is both theistic as well as atheistic). But the tragedy is that man can never achieve perfect disbelief and so existentialism is still wavering, and is itself not free from tension.

Scientism (positivism) and Existentialism are both condemned by a section of thinkers today. The former fails to do justice to the spiritual aspect of man, and to the higher values of life, while the latter seems to be an aberration and a perversion, a morbid subjectivism and irrationalism. Our position is that both these ways of thinking are right in rejecting *a priori* speculative systems; they are right in pointing out that the traditional European philosophy has failed to deliver the goods. The distinct contribution of positivism is to demonstrate the emptiness of apriorism in philosophy. It is time that philosophy realizes this now, the natural disposition of man notwithstanding. The value of existentialism lies in its emphasis that philosophy must start from the inner self of man and must refer to his concrete life. But having noted the welcome aspects of the two types of philosophy we must hasten to point out that both are incomplete as philosophy. Rejecting philosophy along with apriorism is like pouring the baby with the bath; the important lesson that scientism can teach is humility, i.e., the realization that the human intellect cannot know the transcendent independently, and not that scientific knowledge is everything. Existentialism when it is theistic is absurdly dogmatic as it asks us to accept the transcendent purely on faith and allows no place to the intellect; this is an impossible position. When, however, existentialism is atheistic, it appears to be shooting in the air, not knowing where to go. Our diagnosis of the situation in European philosophy is that it has failed to realize the importance of faith for philosophy or has failed to achieve a synthesis of revelation and philosophy. Philosophy there makes a virtue of independent thinking and is anxious to disso-

ciate itself from every trace of faith. It fails, and naturally, to justify itself, as it does not give the promised knowledge; positivism and scepticism become chronic. On the other hand Existentialism goes to the other extreme of severing our connection with the intellect and asking us to accept things only on faith. This will not do; reason will have to be satisfied. Spiritual life is the life of the whole man. Faith and reason cannot be compartmentalised.

Why is it that after receiving such repeated shaking from positivism philosophy in Europe does not learn humility, that is, does not turn to revelation? This is probably because philosophy there does not arise out of a spiritual problem or a spiritual need. There is a characteristic statement by Moore, "I do not think that the world or the sciences would ever have suggested to me any philosophical problems. What has suggested philosophical problems to me is things which other philosophers have said about the world or the sciences". We feel tempted to say that one gets the philosophy one deserves. If life and the world do not suggest any problems, we will naturally have a philosophy which has nothing to do with life and the world. On the other hand earnest spiritual search would naturally turn us to revelation.

There is another reason also why philosophy does not turn to revelation or scripture in the west particularly after Kant. The reason is that the word of God is taken to reveal only commandments or injunctions and not reality. In other words only *vidhi-Śruti* is there and not *siddhārtha bodhaka śruti*. Śāṅkāracharya was very keen about establishing that the scripture reveals not only *vidhi* (commandments) but also reality, and further, he held that *śruti* is capable of giving not only indirect knowledge but even direct knowledge (*śabdāparokṣavāda*), so that the transcendent could be realized here and now. This approach not being there, we find only apriorism and its opposition in the sphere of western philosophy.

It appears to us that if philosophy has to justify its existence as distinct from science on the one hand and dogmatic theology or religion on the other it must have three things. Firstly, it must be born of a problem or crisis. The crisis of which philosophy is born is a kind of disillusionment or awakening, the revolutionary realization of the emptiness of our cherished values. This alone can give the proper impetus to go in search of something deeper; without the

realization of the hollowness of the world of becoming it is difficult to imagine how one can go in search of Being or the permanent; one must realize that what one knows and one has is not what one desires to know or have. It is only in relation to this awakening that philosophy can have its proper justification or relevance.

But this is not enough; along with this awakening there must be receptivity or the humility to accept. The earnestness with which we seek truth can be measured only by the depth of receptivity we have. If one wants to know what one does not know one should be willing to accept or to be guided by one who claims to know. There may be the fear of deception but an earnest seeker has no option but to start with faith though, of course, he cannot end with it. *Śraddhāvān labhate jñānam*, says the Gīta. Even science is based on some kind of implicit faith. The initial faith with which philosophy has to start is three-fold : that, there is some transcendent reality beyond the empirical, that it can be known, and that this knowledge is communicable.

But we must not stop with faith if we are to avoid dogmatism and fanaticism. There must be critical and intelligent understanding of that is revealed and this is what distinguishes philosophy from religion as understood in the West. The distinction between philosophy and religion is not that the one depends on faith and the other does not; both being spiritual depend on faith. The distinction lies in their orientation. Philosophy is like waking from a dream; it is at once the realization of the falsity of the apparent reality as well as the vision of a new level of reality. Further, philosophy must be critical as its aim is knowledge. Religion on the other hand begins with the consciousness of a new factor in life, a new power; it is like the consciousness of the magical or the miraculous. Initially the consciousness of such power does not require or imply any belief in the falsity of the world; in fact the world seems to be the field for the manifestation of that power. But ultimately religion too comes to realize that all else except that power is mere show. The two disciplines philosophy and religion, are suitable to two different types of persons; they need not be regarded as lower or higher.

Modern man considers empirical science to be knowledge because he regards the empirical world as real. That is, he does not have the spiritual disillusionment which is necessary for the very emergence of

philosophy. He is still busy in improving the world with the help of technology and social organisation. He has also lost the capacity for faith. "In the person of Nietzsche western consciousness has passed irretrievably beyond the capacity for honest belief in God" (Collins). So modern Europe has neither the spiritual awakening which the Greeks had nor the spiritual faith which the medievals had, and so no wonder that it suffers from chronic positivism. It is true that faith is not a matter of will; it is constitutional. (Yo yacchraddhahā sa eva saḥ). In the alternative therefore one can at least think of the momentariness of life and its values and derive some perspective from that; but if one cannot do even that then one would do better to keep off from philosophizing because then philosophy would be merely speculative pastime.

THE CENTRAL PROBLEM OF INDIAN METAPHYSICS

Looking at the varied and complex nature of Indian systems, it would appear that it is impossible to detect any central or pivotal problem common to all of them. Although we find that they discuss questions regarding the nature of self, God, causation, substance, universals and so on, yet these are particular questions and are neither central nor common. We are in search of a central question which is common to all systems. The problem of creation cannot be called a common question, as Buddhism and Jainism do not bother about it. Nor can we regard the problem of substance as common, because not only Buddhism, but also the Sāṃkhya and Yoga systems, do not raise it. The same is true about the question regarding the nature of reality. These problems are neither common nor central. If any other suggestion is made, we will try to see whether it satisfies our two conditions: first, whether it is common to all the systems, and second, whether it is of central metaphysical importance to every system in the sense that all other doctrines of the system depend on it.

Needles to say, we are trying to discover that basic problem which determines the peculiar logic of every system so that any change in that logic affects the whole metaphysical structure. The problem of relation is, in our view, such a central problem. It is, as will be shown, on their attitude to the nature of relation that the various doctrines of the different systems seem to hinge, and it is a problem which every system has to discuss. Before we proceed to develop our thesis, let us point out that the problem raised here is not the same as that raised by

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Hume. There is no doubt that Hume brought the problem of relation to the forefront in modern philosophy for the first time. He pointed out that the central problem of philosophy was the problem of relation in general and of causal relation in particular. The problems regarding substance and quality, etc., were really secondary. All the same, it must be noticed that Hume's formulation of the problem was different, as he was attacking the problem in the context of British empiricism. His problem—whether there is any cognitive basis for our belief in necessary relations—is epistemological, while the problem raised in the Indian systems is metaphysical. The question asked here is whether relations are real. We are going to read the whole of Indian philosophy in the light of this question and as such, we will be making generalizations which will expose us to all the risks to which generalizations are open. Let us see how far we succeed.

Commonly speaking, there are two basic aspects or features of our experience : identity and difference. We find these two in our selves as subjects as well as in the objects we perceive. All pairs of categories, such as substance and quality, permanence and change, subject and object, body and soul, universal and particular, one and many, can be reduced to these two basic features of experience, identity and difference. But identity and difference, whether in the subject or in the object, are not just juxtaposed with an air of indifference to each other; they are believed to be somehow related; the one seems to belong to the other or the one seems to imply the other. There is change and yet there is somehow permanence also. This is our common natural belief and we do not feel bothered about their relation except when we become reflective and metaphysical. But is the relation between the two real? If so, how can both belong to one and the same thing, diametrically opposed as they are to each other? The various systems of Indian metaphysics seem to us to be different attempts to answer the above question.

It is possible to formulate *a priori* all the possible basic approaches to this question: First, it may be held that identity, difference, and the relation between the two are all equally real. Second, it may be contended that while identity and difference are real, the relation between the two is false. Third, it is possible to maintain that not only the relation but also one of the relata—either identity or difference—must be false. Fourth, one may take the position, which is the exact opposite of the first position, that identity, difference, and

the relation between the two are all equally false. To put it briefly, either all the three are real or all the three are false, or only the relation is false or relation as well as one of the terms are both false. These alternatives are exhaustive and exclusive, and every system of Indian philosophy can be brought under one or the other of these four possible views.

That all the three—the relation as well as the relata—are equally real is the fundamental metaphysical doctrine of all the realist systems of India. It is a tenet common to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, the Mīmāṃsā, Jainism and all the realist interpretations of Vedānta, such as Dvaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita, Śuddhādvaita, etc. This is because a pluralist view of reality cannot be sustained without accepting the reality of relation. The question raised here is: How can there be an unreal relation between two reals? Realist systems therefore rightly emphasize the reality of relation. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika is the most thorough and consistent elaboration of this viewpoint. It is easy to see how the doctrine of *samavāya* (inherence) is central in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system; the categories of *drava* (substance), *guṇa* (quality), *karman* (action) and *sāmānya* (universal) hang on *samavāya* even as does the doctrine of *asat kāryavāda* (the theory that the effect does not pre-exist in its cause). Because of its centrality, critics such as the Vedāntins and the Buddhists concentrate their attention on this concept and attack it vigorously. The Buddhists, as empiricists, ask the question: If relation is as real as the relata, why is it not seen as a thing? The Vedāntins press the question: If relation is as real as the relata, then it would itself need another relation to relate it to the relata and there would be a regress ad infinitum. In any event, our concern at present is not whether the acceptance of the reality of relation is tenable, but only that the reality of relation is pivotal in all the realist systems. Their merit is that they keep us near common sense.

The weaknesses of the realist view of relation were easily noticed by the Sāṃkhya-Yoga thinkers, who took the position that although the terms are real, the relation between them is false. Relation cannot be of the same status as the relata. *Puruṣa* (consciousness; spirit) and *prakṛti* (nature; material force)—the one representing identity and the other representing difference—are both real, but the relation between the two is not real or ultimate: it can be removed by *viveka* or discriminating knowledge. There is no real relation either between *puruṣa* and

prakṛti or between two *puruṣas*. The question here is : How can there be a real relation between two such incompatible and exclusive realities as *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* or identity and difference ? One is here reminded of the Buddhist dictum : *yo vīruddha dharmādhyaśavān na asau ekoḥ*. That cannot be one which has opposite attributes. The Sāṃkhya-Yoga fondly believes that the dissolution of relation will result in the separation and security of *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*. The Sāṃkhya philosophers fail to see that a relation has two aspects—that of relating as well as of separating. The presence of a relation between two things means connection as well as separation. But the Sāṃkhya philosophers thought that a relation means only connection and so as soon as the relation is rejected, the relata will fall apart. It does not occur to them to ask the question : If the relation between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* is false, why do the two not become one ? What is there to stand between them ? In other words, they are not able to see that there cannot be two independent things or that the conception of two absolutes is self-contradictory. Further, they do not see that if relation is false, then the relation between cause and effect also would be false, and that would mean the *vivartavāda* (the doctrine of appearance) of Advaita Vedānta. Nor do they see that the logic of accepting identity behind difference would lead to the acceptance of one *puruṣa* behind the appearance of the plurality of *puruṣas*. The merit of the Sāṃkhya is its appreciation of the difference in the status of the relata and their relation.

The Buddhists and the Vedāntins took no time in noticing that the Sāṃkhya view of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* as two absolutes or two independent realities was an impossible position. They both agreed with the Sāṃkhya as against the realists that relation could not be as real as the relata, first, because relation is not given like the relata and second, because if relation also were real, then it would itself become a term. So relation must have a status different from that of the relata; it must be false. But they argued further that if relation is false, one of the terms also must be false—"difference" for the Vedāntin and "identity" for the Buddhist. It is for this reason that the Vedāntin is in favour of the unifying category of self or *Ātman*, while the Buddhist rejects all unifying categories such as self, substance, universals, etc. Their common logic is that if relation is false, it is because one of the terms is false ; there cannot be an unreal relation between two reals, or the falsity of relation entails the falsity of one of the relata.

The intriguing question that arises here is this: Though the Buddhists and the Advaitins seem to accept the same logic—the falsity of relation entails the falsity of one of the terms—how is it that while the one comes to accept the reality of difference, the other takes only identity as real? The Advaitin advocates the reality of identity on the basis of the logic that identity is more basic or fundamental than difference—*abheda pūrvako bhedaḥ*. The analysis of sleep and the possibility of *nirvikalpa samādhi* (dualityless concentration) show that identity is independent of difference, while difference cannot even be known unless there is identity. So the Advaitin accepts identity and rejects difference. The Buddhist argues in a different way. His point is that reality must be *arthakriyākārin* or efficient, and identity or permanence cannot be *arthakriyākārin*, and so it is unreal. Difference is real as it can explain change. It is obvious that this step of the Buddhist to start with an *a priori* definition of reality is rather dogmatic; it is like saying that reality is what I like it to be. But the merit of the Buddhist and the Advaitin is that they accept at least one feature of experience as real and do not cut both the wings of experience, as it were. It is for the Mādhyamika to take that step.

The fourth alternative, that all the three—the two terms and the relation between them—are equally unreal is advocated by the Mādhyamika, who detects an element of dogmatism in both the Advaitic and the Buddhist schools. His point is that identity and difference, being correlated, must go together; if one is false the other is also, and if you accept the one you must also accept the other. Identity and difference—*ātmanvāda* and *anātmavāda*—being incompatible, both cannot be accepted but both can be rejected. If the logic of the Advaitin and of the *anātmavādin* is that falsity of relation means the falsity of one of the terms, the logic of the Mādhyamika is that the falsity of one of the terms means the falsity of the other also, the two being relative. The Mādhyamika refuses to accept either the Advaitin's claim that identity is more basic or the other Buddhist's claim that reality is efficient (*arthakriyākārin*). He points out that neither pure identity nor pure difference can explain change, as change requires both identity and difference, and yet both cannot be accepted. That is the paradox of all categories according to the Mādhyamika; *tattva* (reality) must be beyond all categories. While the logic of the Mādhyamika seems to be inexorable and ruthless, its shortcoming seems to be that it throws *tattva* completely out of experience, and one wonders whether

such a *tattva*, which has nothing to do with us or our experience, can ever be realized. There seems to be no point of contact with *tattva*. In order to be free from contradiction *tattva* must be transcendent, but in order to be realized it must also be immanent in experience. This is a point appreciated by the Advaitin.

Our brief survey of the metaphysical position of the different Indian systems brings out two things. First, all the different systems can be exhaustively comprehended under the four possible views regarding relation, and so the question of relation is common to all of them. Second, the main doctrines of the various systems can be derived from their attitude to the status of relation; in fact, their attitude to relation gives them their fundamental logic, and so it can be regarded as the pivot of the system. It is for this reason that we maintain the thesis that the problem of relation is the central problem of Indian metaphysics.

THE PROBLEM OF INTERPRETING THE UPANISADAS

There seem to be two main problems regarding the interpretation of the upaniṣads. One problem is whether the upaniṣads have a unity of teaching or their teaching has a diversity. The other problem is whether the absolutistic interpretation by Śāṅkara is more sound and acceptable or the realistic and pluralistic interpretation by other Acāryas. Before we take up these two problems, we may ask an incidental but interesting question as to why the upaniṣads need to be interpreted at all and why they cannot be taken literally. Why does the śruti not give its message in a language which would require no interpretation and would thereby rule out the very possibility of differences ?

Our answer to the above question is two fold. Firstly, there can be no language, howsoever literal, which cannot be interpreted in different ways; even ordinary common sentences are open to different interpretations. There is nothing which cannot be misunderstood. Secondly, there is an additional difficulty with regard to śruti. The difficulty is that all language is meant primarily for empirical purposes (*vyavahāra*), and śruti has to make use of that language to express the non-empirical or the transcendent. The result is that language necessarily ceases to be literal and straight. For this reason, śruti must of necessity be interpreted. No wonder therefore that there are different interpretations of śruti.

II

Turning to the problem regarding the unity of teaching in the upaniṣads, we find that not only western scholars but also Indian scholars hold the view that "the thoughts of the upaniṣads do not hang together"¹ or that "the upaniṣads do not embody a single doctrine".² It seems to us that diversity in the teaching of upaniṣads appears to be only from a superficial point of view. There are serious considerations which go against this view. Firstly, it is against tradition which has a better claim to respect and acceptance. The tradition that the upaniṣads have a unity of teaching is older than the Brahma-Sūtras which may be regarded as one of the many attempts to synthesise the upaniṣads. No Acārya whatever be his interpretation of the Brahma Sūtras or the upaniṣads ever questioned the unity of the upaniṣadic teaching. The upaniṣads have to be interpreted and therefore they can be variously interpreted but it does not follow from this that they lack unity of teaching.

A more serious consideration against the above view would be that it does not take into account the true nature and purpose of śruti. It has to be remembered that śruti is not a compendium of views and theories, much less a collection of facts. The one and the only purpose of śruti is to reveal what cannot be known otherwise by the natural sources of knowledge. Śruti reveals the transcendent or the unconditioned; it removes our doubts regarding that and helps us in realizing that. Śruti takes us from the sphere of "may be" which is all that can be guessed by reason to the sphere of "is" or a categorical affirmation.

III

The second problem as to whether the upaniṣadic philosophy is realistic or absolutistic brings us right into the heart of the controversy between Śankara and other Acāryas. The problem is : Does Advaita or *ekomevādvītyam* mean merely that there is no other reality like Brahman (that is, Brahman is matchless) or does it mean that there is no other reality whatsoever except Brahman ? Are we to take the world of plurality and diversity as real along with Brahman as the supreme reality or are we to reject diversity and plurality as false ?

1. Radhakrishnan : Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, p. 141.

2. Hiriyanna : Outlines of Indian Philosophy, p. 53.

Does Brahman supersede the world of plurality or is it merely added on to the world of plurality ?

If we study the upaniṣads carefully, it would appear that there are two most important questions that are raised there. One question is : What is that by knowing which everything is known ?³ There must be some one thing by knowing which everything becomes known. The other question which is related to the first is this : What is that by knowing which one becomes immortal and crosses the world of suffering ?⁴ It may be noted that the answer to both the questions is the same; it is by knowing Brahman that everything becomes known⁵, and again it is by knowing Brahman that one becomes immortal and free from suffering⁶. The more important point to be noted is that the emphasis in both the questions is on knowledge; it is by knowledge and knowledge of one thing that both *sarvajñatva* (knowledge of everything) and *mukti* (freedom) should be possible.

It follows then that the upaniṣadic teaching regarding Brahman has to be so interpreted that three conditions are satisfied : (a) by knowing Brahman everything should be known, (c) by knowing Brahman freedom from suffering should be possible, (c) *by knowing* Brahman and not by any other method, one should be able to attain *mukti*. Only that interpretation of the upaniṣads therefore can be regarded as valid which gives us a conception of Brahman which satisfies these three conditions.

IV

We feel that the pluralistic-realistic interpretation of the upaniṣads cannot satisfactorily meet the above conditions although these demands cannot be regarded as illegitimate even by realist Acāryas. If Brahman is regarded as a self (albeit infinite) beside other selves or as a reality beside other realities, as is done by the realists, it becomes difficult to understand, how man can hope to know everything. How is *sarvajñatva* possible to man ? In a pluralistic system, *sarvajñatva* can be understood only as knowledge of all the infinite particulars, but

3. Kasminnu bhagavo vijñāte sarvamidaṁ vijñātam bhavati, Mundaka up. I, i, 3.

4. Brhadāranyaka upaniṣad II, iv, 3. Maitreyi's question to Yājñavalkya.

5. Brhadāranyaka upaniṣad II, iv, 5.

6. Chhāndogya upaniṣad VII, i, 3, and Kena upaniṣad II, 4.

it is not possible to show, keeping in view the objections of the Mimāṃsakas, how man who has only a finite intellect can attain infinite knowledge. There seems to be no principle to demonstrate this possibility. So the realist has either to deny *sarvajñatva* to man or he has to ask us to accept it merely as an object of faith. He cannot give us a principle to explain *sarvajñatva*. Nor is it possible to explain how by knowing Brahman other things can be known. Similarly, the realist cannot logically explain how by knowing Brahman I can be free from suffering if Brahman is other than myself. How can knowledge of another reality liberate me? No wonder that though knowledge was accepted as necessary by the realist Acāryas, it was not taken to be sufficient. Knowledge has to be supplemented by bhakti. So it seems to us that the realist Acāryas are not able to do justice to the triple principles namely, that knowledge of Brahman means the knowledge of everything, that knowledge of Brahman brings immortality and that knowledge is not only necessary but also sufficient.

V

Man can have *sarvajñatva* or knowledge of everything only if everything is somehow one or there is an underlying unity. Then alone by knowing the unity of everything man can be said to know everything; man cannot hope to know the infinite diversity of things. Some kind of monism is necessary; but mere monism is not enough. A monism like *Brahma-pariṇāmavāda* no doubt explains the unity of things and makes the *sarvajñatva* possible for man. But there are two serious objections against *Brahman-pariṇāmavāda*. Firstly, the doctrine that holds that the universe is the *pariṇāma* or transformation of Brahman makes Brahman changeable and hence imperfect as changeability is a sign of imperfection. Secondly, if everything is literally and actually a transformation of Brahman, that is, if unity and plurality both were equally real, then bondage and freedom both would be meaningless; there is nothing which is to be rejected. Śaṅkara very pertinently argues that if unity and multiplicity both were real, then how could the knowledge of unity, cancel the experience of multiplicity (*ubbaya satyatāmhi katham ekatva jñānena nānātva jñanam anupadyat. Br. Su. Bh. II, i, 14*). So it is clear that mere monism or some type of *Brahma-pariṇāmavāda* will not do; monism satisfies only one condition, namely, that by knowing Brahman everything can be known, but it does not satisfy the other two conditions.

Śankara had the rare insight to see the philosophic significance of *sarvajñatva* and its relation to the problem of *mukti*. He saw as no body else did that *Sarvajñatva* for man is possible only if Brahman is conceived as the underlying unity of all multiplicity. Omniscience in the sense of knowing the infinite particulars may be possible in the case of *Īśvara*, but it cannot be shown to be possible in the case of man. Man can know everything only in the sense of knowing the underlying unity of everything.⁷ So either omniscience is denied to man as is done in some systems or if it is taken to be possible for man also it can be only in the qualitative sense of knowing the reality of reality (*satyasya satyam*). But since *śruti* declares the possibility of *sarvajñatva* for man also, we have no option but to accept it, and that can be done only if *sarvajñatva* means knowing the essence or the unity of things.

The knowledge of the fundamental unity of things brings about *mukti* as that alone can do it. The realists do not see the point that all fear, suffering is due to duality, multiplicity or difference. So *mukti* is possible only by transcending difference and duality; that is why the *śruti* declares : how can there be any suffering for one who sees unity everywhere ? (*Tatra ko mohaḥ kaḥ śokaḥ ekatvam anupaśyataḥ, Īśo Up.*⁷) If multiplicity were real then our finitude would be real and there could be no freedom from suffering and mortality. Multiplicity must be false if only to make *mukti* possible; there must be transcendence implying rejection of the apparent as false. It is for this reason that Śankara emphasises the negative *śruti vākyas* such as *neti neti, neha nānāsti kincana* and so on.

If we consistently stick to the principle that *mukti* is possible by knowledge alone and by nothing else (*ṛtam jñānanna-mukti*) then we will have to admit that bondage is something which can be removed by knowledge. If bondage were due to another reality as in *Sāṃkhya* or if it were due to anything inherent in our nature, it could not be

7. *Yo sarvajñah sarvavid.* MUNDAKA UPANIṢAD, I. i. 9. It may be asked here why *sarvajña* and *sarvavid* both terms have been used here although they apparently mean one and the same thing. But it is not mere repetition because while the one term stands for omniscience in the sense of knowing the underlying unity, the other term may be taken to mean omniscience in the sense of knowing infinite details. God is omniscient in both senses while man can be omniscient only in one sense. See the author's article, *Sarvajñatva* in Dr. Bhagavan Das Commemoration Vol., Kashi Vidyapith, 1969.

any means be removed, much less by knowledge. Knowledge can remove only ignorance and only knowledge can do that. Bondage can be removed only if it is taken to be rooted in ignorance, and it must be the ignorance of the self and not of anything else; because bondage is in or of the self. This is why knowledge of self can liberate the self. We are asked to know Brahman because Brahman is our very self and not anything other than self. Thus the advantage of conceiving bondage to be due to the ignorance of self is five fold : (a) Knowledge can remove it, (b) Knowledge alone can remove it, (c) Knowledge of self will remove it, (d) Knowledge of self alone will remove it, (e) Bondage is destroyed by knowledge absolutely and once for ever.

It may be incidentally observed that Śāṅkara's interpretation of the upaniṣads establishes the autonomy of philosophy or knowledge in as much as it shows that knowledge of self by itself is enough to achieve the spiritual goal. This is the real significance of the autonomy of philosophy or knowledge. In the west there seems to be a mistaken view of philosophy according to which the autonomy of philosophy consists in its depending on reason alone and in being independent of revelation. It appears that in the west, *śruti* is regarded only as an object of faith and not as a source or rather as an indispensable source of knowledge. The indispensability of *śruti* is owing to the circumstance that *śruti* and only *śruti* can give us a categorical knowledge of the transcendent; all other sources have their limitations. The autonomy of philosophy means the self-sufficiency of knowledge and not its independence of *śruti*.

With the above considerations in view, we feel that only Śāṅkara's interpretation of upaniṣads is tenable as that alone satisfactorily explains the possibility of *sarvajñatva* to man and the possibility of attaining eternity by knowledge alone. The additional merit of his view is that there is place in it for belief not only in Saguna Brahman but also in the variety of gods and goddesses. He can assign importance to karma and bhakti also. Empirical diversity can go well with transcendental unity, but if diversity is introduced even in the sphere of the transcendent, there can be no escape from conflict and controversy. Śāṅkara soars so high that there can be none with whom he can have conflict

Svasiddhānta vyavāsthāsu dvaitino niścitaḥ drḍham.
Parasparam virudhyante tairayam na virudhyate,

THE CONCEPT OF ÍŚVARA IN INDIAN† PHILOSOPHY :

About a century ago Nietzsche declared that God is dead and today we find that nobody except some few theologians likes to talk about God in the contemporary Western thought. It looks as though God had entered European philosophy by accident, if not by mistake.* In India, however, we find an opposite picture. Systems of philosophy seem to have begun with at least an indifference to, if not an actual denial of, God but they have all ended with an explicit acceptance of God. Of the six orthodox systems, serious doubts have been expressed whether the ancient doctrine of the Nyāya was theistic; Kāṇāda sūtras do not 'openly refer to God'; Mīmāṃsā is well known for its criticism of the idea of God; the Sāṃkhya is frankly atheistic and the Yoga just mentions Íśvara as *puruṣa viśeṣa*. The heterodox systems of Jainism and Buddhism are avowedly atheistic. But the remarkable fact is that inspite of their negativism or indifference in the beginning, God enters these systems after a certain development. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika becomes staunch theism, the Sāṃkhya becomes Śeśvara and God is 'slowly smuggled in' even in the Mīmāṃsa system by the later writers. The strongly devotional character of the later phases of Jainism and Buddhism is but another instance of the slow smuggling in of God in some form. Such is the theistic instinct of India and such is the impor-

† Printed in the Proceedings of the Seminar on Language and Reality C. A. S. P. (B. H. U.) 1968.

* "In the person of Nietzsche Western consciousness has passed irretrievably beyond the capacity for honest belief in God!" J. Collins. *The Existentialists* p. 218.

tance of the concept of Īśvara in Indian philosophy. It will be our endeavour to draw attention to that aspect of Īśvara which makes it an indispensable concept for philosophy.

I

Philosophy in India has been one with religion in its earnest concern with the transcendent. However, it can be distinguished from religion on the ground that the method of realising or attaining the transcendent is knowledge and not love or devotion. Being concerned with the transcendent or the non-empirical, that is, something which cannot be known by any method or means of knowledge used in the empirical sphere, philosophy distinguishes itself from science also. The knowledge of the transcendent is the main aspiration of philosophy, but the problem is : how is the transcendent to be known ? It is here that we find a kind of unanimity in all the Indian systems; all of them accept an authority which reveals the existence and the nature of the transcendent truth. If philosophy is concerned with the transcendent, the acceptance of authority is indispensable, because, as Kant has demonstrated, reason alone cannot take us to the Unconditioned or the transcendent. Either we accept the scriptural revelation or we are condemned to agnosticism and positivism.

It may be apprehended that the present view would make reason useless and philosophy completely dogmatic. But it is not so. Although the acceptance of authority is necessary, it is not sufficient; had authority been sufficient there would have been no philosophy. Authority does not make reason utterly futile; reason can be of help as an ally though not as an independent source. It may help us by way of refuting counter-hypotheses and may thus facilitate an intelligent acceptance of Śruti; revelation has not only to be accepted but has also to be properly understood. Secondly, reason may enable us to present the teaching of the Śruti in a consistent and coherent manner, a problem taken up by the sūtra *tattu samanvayāt* of the Brahma-sūtras. So reason can be useful in showing what is impossible or self-contradictory and what is possible or self-consistent; but it can tell us only what *may be* and not what *is*. Śruti takes us from the sphere of what *may be* to the sphere of what *is*. Even a positivist would not object to this limited use of reason and it is this limited use of reason that gives us philosophy. Revela-

tion without reason is formless while reason without revelation is contentless. In the wide sphere of possibility given or suggested by reason scripture points out the real or the existent.

It may be further objected that although reason may support revelation and may present its teaching in a consistent form yet the initial acceptance of śruti remains a matter of faith only. We want to emphasise that this acceptance of revelation is not something blind, dogmatic or irrational but is born of the conviction that man can have no access to the transcendent by himself. Faith is a necessity for any one determined to have a pilgrimage to the Transcendent; it is like accepting a chart from a man of knowledge. Moreover, it is not that the transcendent remains for ever an object of faith; the teaching of the śruti is confirmed when faith culminates in knowledge. As is well known in the Indian tradition, such a confirmation by knowledge or experience is possible here and now; it is not something that can take place only after death. So we begin with faith, pass through reason and reach intuition (śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana).

II

We have started with the insistence that any attempt to know the transcendent or the unconditioned without the help of the scripture will be only an adventure and not an earnest endeavour that philosophy is. Our next thesis is that no revelation of the transcendent truth is possible without God or a being eternally in possession of that truth. Either there is no revelation and knowledge of the transcendent or it must be by one who never needs revelation i. e. by a perfect being ever in possession of truth. Two objections to this view may be at once noted and disposed of. Like the Mimāṃsakas one may hold that revelation is not by a person; it is there as a beginningless tradition. The Vedas are *apauruṣeya*. This theory of the Mimāṃsakas is part of their other theory that the world is beginningless and not created. This is how they dispose of the need for a creator and an original teacher both. But they seem to be inconsistent because the very Vedas which they accept as authoritative talk about creation and dissolution. In order to get rid of this uncomfortable position, they take recourse to the view that all this is mere *arthavāda*, as the Vedas teach only injunctions or *vidhi*.

We know how effectively Śaṅkara refutes the view that the Vedas contain only *vidhi-vākyas*. It is true that if the scripture is to escape the charge of being redundant it must not talk about *siddha-vastu*, that is, about things that can be empirically known. But it is not true that *vidhi* or *adrṣṭa-phala* is the only thing that cannot be empirically known; there may be also a trans-empirical reality for which we need the scripture. In fact the Mīmāṃsā thesis that the world is beginningless cannot itself be known empirically, and the Mīmāṃsā cannot depend on the scripture for it. The mīmāṃsā holds that a creator of the world is inconceivable, and so the world must be beginningless. The arthāpatti here is faulty because the concept of a creator of the world cannot conclusively be proved to be inconceivable. The Mīmāṃsā therefore seems to be wrong in holding that the world is beginningless and that there is neither a creator nor an original teacher. It sounds like naturalism to say that the supernatural truth is there with man from the very beginning. To justify the scripture it is not enough to say that it teaches *vidhi* which leads us only to a conditional good; the true justification of the scripture is that it teaches a truth which leads us to an absolute good and satisfies the eternal and universal craving of the human soul.

The heterodox systems of Jainism and Buddhism agree with the Mīmāṃsā in not accepting a creator but they do accept an original teacher such as Pārśvanātha or Mahāvīra or Buddha. But while they accept an original teacher they reject the Vedas. Their contention seems • to be that truth can be found out by man by sheer self-effort; Mahāvīra and Buddha did it. And if man can attain truth independently where is the need of postulating Īśvara for the sake of revelation? As regards creation Jainism and Buddhism would explain the whole world process in terms of our karmas (*Karmajam loka-vaicitryam*). Here we do not want to go into the question whether the world process can be explained merely in terms of our karmas. Our present concern is whether the first teacher can be a mere man. The argument that man can realize truth independently strikes at the very root of Jainism and Buddhism. If Mahāvīra and Buddha can realize truth independently why not others also? Where is the need of accepting even Mahāvīra and Buddha? Did Mahāvīra and Buddha need a teacher or not? If it is held that they did need a teacher, then the question as to who was the first teacher is not solved; if they did not need a teacher why should any one need? If a first teacher is admitted, and if that teacher is in

any way said to be exceptional, then the whole argument against the acceptance of Īśvara is lost; because we would say that Īśvara is just that exceptional being who does not need a teacher, that is who is ever in possession of truth and who imparts it to others. So if we do not introduce the complication regarding the creatorship of Īśvara and accept Him only as the original teacher there is no reason why Buddha and Mahāvira should not be regarded as Īśvara. The minimum element in the idea of Īśvara is that of a being who has wisdom without the help of a teacher and who has the compassion to transmit that wisdom to others, and this element is found in the founders of the Jainism and Buddhism. It is therefore not by accident that these founders or teachers are worshipped as Īśvara.

The above idea, however, seems to be better appreciated in Buddhism than in Jainism, specially in the Mahāyāna Buddhism. The Mahāyānists do not look upon Buddha as a mere man or upon Gotama as the first teacher. Buddhahood is converted into a principle which manifested itself in Gotama who is but one of the many incarnations of that principle. Thus while historical revelation through a divine being is admitted, neither an absolute beginning nor a fixed number of such revelation is accepted. If we accept an absolute beginning of revelation, as is done by Western religions, then the difficulty as to how the first teacher came to know the truth would persist. The principle behind the acceptance of an original teacher is that there must be some one who does not stand in need of revelation. Western religions avoid this difficulty by holding that the real source of truth is God who sends His son or His messiah to reveal that truth. Jainism too virtually makes the process of revelation beginningless by accepting a series of any number of Tirthaṅkaras in different *Kalpas*. The western religions, however, believe in only one teacher while Jainism accepts twentyfour Tirthaṅkaras. So the Jainas do seem to feel that the world needs the grace of a teacher every now and then, but it remains a mystery why they accept only a fixed number of Tirthaṅkaras. The Western religions do not seem to appreciate the point that the goodness, the compassion which makes God send His Son or Messiah once would continue to do so again and again. Either they are afraid that the subsequent incarnations or messiahs would make the previous ones redundant or they think that the end of the world is quite near and there is no need of any more revelation. All this is only dogmatism and we believe that we should not put an arbitrary bar to the infinite

goodness of God. The infinite Goodness of God and His infinite freedom require that He should come down to aid the suffering souls any number of times.

III

We have so far shown that any philosophy or religion which accepts some transcendent truth or reality must also admit a being who is in constant possession of that truth and who has the goodness to reveal it, and that such a being is *Īśvara* or God Himself. This view is only implicit in Jainism and Buddhism but is explicit in Yoga and Sāṃkhya philosophies. In these systems *Prakṛti* is responsible for creation but *Īśvara* is accepted as the first Teacher, an ideal person helping the struggling humanity. But the idea of *Īśvara* does not seem to be organically related to the system. One may ask the question : Is *Īśvara* indispensable for the Yoga ? The answer is both yes and no. As the first teacher *Īśvara* is indispensable, but devotion to Him is just one of the many alternative ways of attaining *samādhi*. If contemplation of *Īśvara* removes obstacles from the aspirant's way, it is difficult to see how *Īśvara-praṇidhāna* is a matter of choice as Patañjali makes it appear. Probably it is because God is neither the creator nor the moral administrator that *Īśvara-praṇidhāna* is suggested as one of the several ways of attaining *samādhi*. May be that Patañjali wanted to suggest that for the practice of Yoga belief in God was not necessary, and even those who were not inclined to believe in God could attain *samādhi*; the Jainas and Buddhists are the most illustrious examples of those who attain *samādhi* without belief in God. However, those who are spiritually disposed to believe in the existence of God have the additional advantage of removing their obstacles by *Īśvara-praṇidhāna*. But even those who are not interested in *Īśvara-praṇidhāna* have to take into account *Īśvara* as the *Ādi-Guru* or the First Teacher. He differs from liberated souls in two respects : firstly, He was never in bondage and secondly, He has the *saṅkalpa* or desire to help others. In fact it is due to His *saṅkalpa* that He is able to assume a form at the beginning of every *Kalpa* so that He may deliver the saving knowledge.

The Yoga doctrine seems to have many difficulties. *Īśvara* is admitted as a person having infinite knowledge and infinite goodness; but union with or nearness to Him is not mentioned as part of the

ideal of life. It is unintelligible how a soul can help desiring the company of such a perfect Being. To recognise infinite goodness and yet not to desire association with that is a great paradox. The negative Yoga-ideal of Kaivalya is like the conception of a person sitting idle even after discovering a great treasure near him. Goodness is such a thing that even God likes to be surrounded by good souls. To recognise God without loving Him is as good as denying Him. The other difficulty is that though God is omniscient and all goodness He does not seem to be all powerful as He does not have control over Prakṛti. Our submission is that the infinite goodness of God requires that He should also be infinitely powerful, should be creator and controller of the universe, otherwise He can not make His Goodness really effective. It is a travesty to conceive God merely as an impotent spectator. Infinite Goodness must be more active than a mere Teacher. Obviously the difficulty is due to the dualistic metaphysics of the Yoga system.

IV

In spite of the fact that in the Sāṃkhya, Yoga and even in Jainism and Buddhism, an original Teacher who may be regarded as Īśvara is admitted they cannot be regarded as theistic systems in the strict sense of the term. Theism requires that God should not only be the ultimate source of truth but also the creator of the universe. In this respect the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and the Vedāntic schools make an advance on the Sāṃkhya and Yoga; they accept God as creator also. But a kind of dualism which vitiates the Sāṃkhya-Yoga lurks in these systems also except in the case of the Advaita. God does not create matter and souls; He merely gives a form to the universe utilising the already existing souls and matter. In the Nyāya Vaiśeṣika, Īśvara is only a *nimitta-kāraṇa*; the Viśiṣṭādvaita no doubt regards God both as *nimitta* and *upādāna* kāraṇa, but even here God remains practically an efficient cause only, because the *jaḍa tattva* is as real as God Himself. It is for this reason that the western theologians are not prepared to regard even these systems as examples of theism; they point out that there is really no creation or absolute creation in any of these systems; the criticism is partly justified although it is mere narrowness and dogmatism to insist that the doctrine of absolute creation is indispensable for theism.

Apart from the question regarding the nature of creation, it is the merit of these theistic systems to realize that God's goodness does not stop with revelation; His goodness extends to the details of the universe in such a manner that life in the world may serve the best interests of jivas and that every jiva may get the best possible opportunity and facility to attain the highest goal of life. This alone can justify or explain God's interest in creation; the Perfect Being can have no other interest except that of helping the bound souls in their attainment of liberation. The idea of the best possible universe is to be understood in this sense. The best possible universe is not one in which there is no evil or pain but a universe in which everything is so adjusted that the whole is in the best interests of everyone. This is possible only when the Creator combines in Himself infinite wisdom with infinite goodness and infinite power. The God of Sāṃkhya-Yoga merely prescribes a medicine but the God of theistic systems is like a doctor who not only prescribes but also provides the medicine.

Upholders of absolute creation might object that Īśvara in these systems suffers from certain handicaps; He is not an absolute creator and so there can be no question of creating the best possible world. There is matter, there are the souls and there are the past karmas of these souls and God has to adjust Himself to all these. As God does not have a free hand in the matter of creation, neither His goodness nor His power can have free and full scope. The creator must be absolute creator.

While there is some point in the above criticism it must not be forgotten that the doctrine of absolute creation gives rise to more difficulties than it solves. Firstly, it is absolutely unintelligible how any power, even the almighty, can create existence; Indian philosophy finds it absolutely repugnant to believe that even souls can be created. As Spinoza realised, no substance could be created out of nothing. The utmost that we can accept is that the souls are the finite and false modes of the Absolute. Secondly, it is an unfathomable mystery as to why God should indulge in the act of creation; there is no problem and no motive for creating a world. Here in Indian philosophy, there is a problem for God which provides a motive for creation. The problem is the existence of bound souls whom God out of His infinite goodness wants to lead to freedom and therefore creates a world in which he provides such facilities as are necessary for the spiritual

evolution of every soul. But for this gracious act of God no soul could hope to attain freedom. Finally, the most serious difficulty concerning absolute creation is the presence of evil, physical, metaphysical and moral. If God began with pure blank, how is it that He created a world with so much of evil and disparity? There is no satisfactory explanation of evil and inequality on this theory. It is obvious that if evil is real it is either due to God or in spite of Him. In one case God becomes the source of evil and in the other case He becomes impotent. If God is all powerful, impartial and all goodness He cannot be the source of evil and inequality, nor can it be in spite of Him. Indian philosophy therefore chooses to hold that evil and inequality are due to our karmas, and the doctrine of karma requires that there must be a beginningless history of souls; otherwise the problem of original inequality would persist.

The doctrine of karma which is one of the dearest doctrines of Indian philosophy cannot go well with absolute creation. In spite of differences that are both deep and many, all the Indian systems accept the doctrine of karma. What is more, some of them would rather deny God than the law of karma. This is because Indian philosophy was convinced of the moral order in the universe and the law of karma is nothing but a form of the moral order. But for this moral order no spiritual life is conceivable. The law of karma makes morality a necessary condition of our life because the universe is morally governed. It not only explains evil and inequality but also makes them bearable by tracing them to one's own karmas. It absolves God of all responsibility for evil and inequality. While the doctrine of absolute creation makes inequality ultimate, the doctrine of karma accepts inequality only as a temporary feature and believes in the ultimate equality of all souls.

It must also be asserted that the doctrine of karma neither handicaps God as Western religions might suggest nor does it make God redundant as Jainism and Buddhism point out. Instead of handicapping God, it provides data for God's activity and a motive for creation. But for the bound souls there would have been no need of creation. Nor can it be argued that the law of karma alone is enough to explain the universe or that the karmas of every one must bear fruit whether God or no God. The problem is that mere law of karma cannot take us beyond that law. The merit of

the theistic systems is that they recognise this law not as an impersonal principle, because that would amount to naturalism, but as a divine law or the law of the Lord. The implication is that though the law functions normally without any interference yet if and when the Lord chooses He can by all means intervene in the process. Apart from this direct intervention, there is yet another way in which the Divine Hand can be there in the process itself, and that is by way of creating a universe in which the karmas of each individual not only bear fruit but do so in perfect harmony with the rest of the universe. The ordering and adjusting of our karmas in such a manner that every one's spiritual evolution is assured, speeded and facilitated, requires infinite wisdom and goodness. The store of past karmas is already considerable and then we go on piling up further karmas; there could be no end to this process but for the gracious interference of the Divine Hand. All suffering, all evil and inequality is due to our karmas, but it is so calculated and planned as to promote our best spiritual interest.* Viewed in this light every detail of the universe would appear as a mark of Divine Goodness; in fact the very existence of this universe is there, not as an act of absolute power (absolute creation) but as an act of infinite Goodness.

V

Theistic systems here as well as in the west are believers in realism and they are even fanatical about it. Their realism professedly emanates from religious motive in the interests of which they find it necessary to criticise absolutism and pantheism. God is real because the world and the souls in the world are real. Religion is nothing if not prayer, worship and love, and these are not possible unless a real difference between man and God is accepted. Absolutism and pantheism are rejected as they make religion impossible and are guilty of identifying imperfect man with perfect God. The perfect one must be different and even distant from this world which is full of evil and imperfection. The conflict between theism and pantheism both in India and the west is a recurrent feature: theism is intolerant of unity and pantheism is impatient of difference.

Concerning this conflict it is worth while clearing certain misunderstandings. If a system of philosophy identifies God with the world

* c. f. *The Divine Goodness in Śaiva Siddhānta*, December, 1966.

or with man the identification is not made with man or the world as actually found; the identification is with the essence or substance of the world or man. In essence man is one with God, or the world and God are one, and so the question of introducing the imperfections of man or the world into God does not arise; man and the world are not evil or imperfect in their essence but only on the surface. If a distinction between essence and appearance is not made then philosophy ceases to be a discrimination between truth and falsity. The theistic systems do not make this distinction and are so realistic that they think that the finitude and imperfection of the human soul is inherent to it; they fail to see that to regard the soul as finite is as good as regarding it as material, because it is only matter that is divisible and can be finite; if spirit seems to be finite it is because of its association with matter.

As to the objection that love, prayer and worship are not possible in a pantheistic universe, it must be pointed out that it is not a fact that the pantheist does not make a distinction between the human soul and God. Like the theist, the pantheist also admits a distinction but in a different way; whereas the theist takes God and soul as absolutely different entities, the pantheist takes the distinction as the distinction between two levels, between the apparent and the real and not as between two realities. The pantheist even claims that the distinction of levels is more conducive to religion than the acceptance of God and soul as two different realities.

Consider the question of love. Apparently love requires duality but really is it possible for one being to love another who is completely different? Love requires some kind of unity and tends to realize that unity which is obscured by apparent difference. Love is the merger of one into the other. The Biblical sentence 'Not my will but Thy will be done.' means just an achievement of unity with the Lord; self-will or self-identity is inconsistent with love. Only that can be really loved which is our self or only that which is ourself can be really loved. If God is the wholly other, one may stoop to Him and fear Him but one cannot love Him. This is the significance of the famous saying of the Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad that everything is dear to us for the sake of self: even God is dear to us just for that reason. If we love God it only means that we want to make Him our very self and this can be done only if He is already our self, not the present self but the deeper

or the higher self; the distinction between the lover and the beloved is there, but it is of levels only; love is the attraction felt by the lower self for the higher self; prayer and worship also should be understood in the same way. No real communion is possible between man and God so long as a real gap between the two is admitted.

It appears to us that even theists realize the point made above, because they believe that the human soul is nothing compared to God and that the goal of religious life is to attain some kind of unity between God and soul. When Rāmānuja says that the soul is atomic and when Christians point out that the soul is just a creature and nothing by itself, the implication is that really God is the only reality. But on account of their realistic obsessions they fail to see that the realization of the nothingness of our actual self must go with the realization of God as our real self, otherwise God cannot be really loved. Similarly when it is asserted that the goal of religions is to attain some kind of unity—*sāmīpya*, *sārūpya*, *sālokya*, *sāyujya*—with the Divine it is not realized that this unity is not possible in the face of real metaphysical difference. There must be a metaphysical basis for union with God; God and soul must be metaphysically one.

VI

There is yet another doctrine dear to the theists which must be considered, namely, the doctrine of the Personality of God. It is pointed out that the pantheistic God can at best be a universal substance but not a person who can love and be loved. The nirguṇa Brahman of Śaṅkara and the featureless (determination-less) substance of Spinoza are cases in point. The God of theists is claimed to be a person who can listen to our prayers, can understand our suffering and can respond; nay, He can even come down to earth as an incarnation for the sake of man; the Nirguṇa Brahman of Śaṅkara cannot do all this. We want to show that neither the personality of God nor the incarnation of God is possible in the frame-work of a dualistic or realistic metaphysics that the theistic systems adopt.

In what sense can God be a person? He is a perfect person and not an imperfect one like ourselves. He is capable of willing. He is capable of feeling and also capable of understanding and knowing. Surely God must be all this. But the question is: do these qualities

really and essentially belong to Him? And if they do so, can we say that God is beyond all duality? If God is really beyond duality which is the realm of imperfection, these qualities cannot *really* belong to Him; and if these qualities *really* belong to Him, God cannot be beyond duality. Rāmānuja takes the position that while God is above *svajātiya* and *viajātiya* differences, He does have *svagatabheda*. But it is inconceivable how a being having internal differences can be an indivisible whole; how will the differences be glued into a unity.

It is because of these difficulties that the Advaitin admits that Īśvara is a person, that He has all the qualities that any theist would demand, only these qualities do not go to form His essence, otherwise they will introduce duality into Him. These qualities are only assumed qualities or upādhis; they do not bind or delimit Him; they do not have any independent reality and there is no real relation between them and God. Theists regard both unity and difference to be equally real but, if so, they would fall apart; there is nothing stronger to bind them. The Advaitin argues that a relation is possible only between a real and an unreal term and not between two reals, because if the terms are equally real they would be independent of each other. If the *bhedavādins* accept *bheda* as real then there can be no relation. One of the two (identity and difference) has got to be accepted as primary. For the Buddhist difference is primary. For the Advaitin unity is primary as all difference presupposes unity. In dualistic philosophy if the reality of difference is denied then there is no duality and if the reality of difference is accepted then there is no relation. It seems to us that Indian theism in which souls and Prakṛti are taken to be as real as God is more difficult to understand than Christian theism, because the former is essentially dualistic and pluralistic. But since Christianity believes in absolute creation, there is no essential or ultimate dualism. In fact, we may venture to say that the doctrine of absolute creation is a religious version of the doctrine of *vivarta*, because absolute creation amounts to the view that the world comes out of God without in any way affecting Him; God creates the world without becoming the world which is wholly dependent on Him. But the trouble is that Christianity regards the created world as real and not as appearance. How can the real be *created* and that too out of nothing? To be consistent, theism whether of the Indian variety or of the western type, must give up its realism and accept absolutism with its implication of *māyāvāda*.

VII

The other doctrine which does not really fit in with the realistic metaphysics of the theistic systems is the doctrine of incarnation which is so dear to them. Avatāravāda is essential for any spiritual religion. In fact the idea of incarnation is as essential for completing the idea of Divine Goodness as the ideas of teacher and creator. God must not only be the first teacher, He must not only be the creator, He must also incarnate Himself in the world. We have already seen that the bound soul by itself cannot know the transcendent truth; there must be a teacher who is eternally free. But the work of the eternally-free teacher is not over after once delivering the truth, because every thing in the world is subject to corruption and decay. Whenever the forces of evil are ascendant and the forces of good seem to be losing the battle, God has to intervene in order to demonstrate to the world that it is the good that ultimately wins. This is why the Lord holds out a hope and an assurance in the Bhagavad Gītā that He incarnates in the world again and again to fight evil and to establish the supremacy of the good. Further, the Lord has also to set an example for others, and for that he has to become man. Still more, according to the Christians, He has to relieve man of his sins by Himself undergoing suffering and even crucifixion. All this is only a greater manifestation of the infinite Divine Goodness.

Although the concept of incarnation is so essential for religion it is very difficult to understand and to accept this concept. The difficulty is : how can God become man ? It is because of this difficulty that incarnations are not easily recognized and accepted; it is for this difficulty that the deists would not like to accept any incarnations. It is true that it is not possible to demonstrate it conclusively that a particular man is an incarnation; the acceptance of an incarnation is a matter of faith. Vivekananda went on testing Shri Ramakrishna throughout his whole life. It appears to us that the difficulty in the acceptance of an incarnation, at least in principle, is due to our realistic obsessions, a faulty metaphysics in the back of our consciousness. In a system of philosophy in which the world is real, even a theoretical possibility of an incarnation cannot be accepted. Theistic religions, although they love the idea of incarnation, seem to rule out the possibility of an incarnation by their excessive insistence on the reality of the world. It is this realism which

prevents the deists from accepting the possibility of incarnation; it is because of this realism that Judaism and Islam accept only messengers of God and not incarnation. God who is perfect is bound to be affected if He enters this imperfect world. The world is too real to permit the entry of God. Christianity makes bold to say that Christ was God Himself, and not a mere messiah; the son and the Father are one. But the doctrine of immaculate conception shows that Christianity does feel the hardness of the realistic metaphysics. God cannot be conceived or be born like ordinary human beings. But we ask : Can God eat and talk and be killed like human beings ? If the world is taken as real, then the Perfect one cannot enter the world; to make incarnation possible it is necessary to accept the world as less real than it claims to be, so that it may not affect the perfection of God when He enters it. The physical frame in which the Lord appears should be as loose as our shirt; it should not be like the skin which would make Him hide-bound. Theistic systems do not provide this metaphysical facility; it is provided only by those systems in which the world is a creation of the *Māyā* of Lord. The great theoretical advantage of *Māyāvāda* is that it brings man and God nearer to each other in several ways. God no more remains a wholly other; and the theoretical possibility of the incarnation of God is secured. It is significant that so long as Buddhism stuck to realism, the doctrine of incarnation did not find favour. Only when Mahāyāna systems accepted the doctrine of *Māyā* that Buddha was accepted as an incarnation and one of the many incarnations at that. Only then was it possible to emphasise *Mahākaruṇā* sufficiently; only then was it possible to regard the Buddha not merely as a man but as the Absolute itself descending on earth for our salvation.

That conception of *Īśvara* alone can be said to be satisfactory which brings out His Infinite Goodness fully, that is, which accepts God as teacher, as creator and also accepts the possibility of His incarnation; because all these are just corollaries from His Goodness. Further, since God is the Perfect or the Ideal Being it should be possible to accept Him as our very self; man's hunger for perfection can never go so long as God is accepted as another being. The *Sāṃkhya-Yoga* accepts God merely as the first Teacher and not as Creator; the *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* and the theistic schools accept God as both Teacher and Creator but in none of these systems God is accepted as our deeper self; He always remains different

from our souls. Incarnations of God are though actually accepted yet the metaphysical realism of these systems does not really permit the possibility of incarnation. The Advaitic conception makes room for all these elements in the idea of Īśvara; the Mahāyāna conception would have been equally satisfactory but for the fact that Buddha is said to have no hand in creation.

Our main contention in this paper may be briefly stated. Any system of philosophy which believes in some transcendent Truth must accept a first Teacher and to the extent all systems of Indian philosophy accept an ādi-Guru they accept Īśvara. Further, being the first Teacher is the manifestation of the principle of Infinite Goodness and the full manifestation of this principle requires that God should also be the creator of the Universe. The perfect one can be our teacher only if He can be born in this universe and only māyāvāda can allow the possibility of His incarnation. He can be truly loved only if He is our inner self which alone we can love and cherish more than anything else. All these are eminently found in the philosophy of Advaitism. It is unfortunate that the place of Īśvara in Advaitism is not adequately appreciated.

THE NATURE OF DIVINE GOODNESS†

Our attitude to God is *existentially* determined. When placed in an *existential* situation there are only two options before man : either to believe in God or to reject God vehemently. Those who reject God seem to have certain expectations from God either for themselves or for the world and being disappointed they react by denying God. God cannot be denied in this way. An atheist is in the last resort a frustrated man; he has certain ideas about the Divine Goodness and those ideas do not seem to be fulfilled; the reaction is atheism or scepticism.¹

To believe in God is to believe in His Goodness. But there are those who believe in God and in His Goodness and may yet be called potential atheists. The reference is to those who believe in God but think of His Goodness in terms of the worldly goods such as progeny, power, name and fame. When such persons are disappointed they react, they feel that if they are not getting any response from God inspite of their faith, prayer and devotion, it could only be because there is no such power as God. After all, they presume, God is not only Good but also infinitely powerful and so there seems to be no reason why our prayers and wishes should not be granted. Can we

† Printed in Śaiva Siddhānta Vol I No. 4, 1967.

1 C. S. Lewis, in *The Problem of Pain* says :

“If you ask me to believe that this is the work of a benevolent and omnipotent spirit, I reply that all the evidence points in opposite direction. Hither there is no spirit behind the universe, or else a spirit indifferent to good and evil, or else an evil spirit.”

This is how Lewis thought when he was an atheist.

believe in a God who is Good but not Powerful or Powerful but not Good? Nor can it be that God is good and powerful but does not know our difficulties or the cries of our hearts; infinite goodness is not possible without infinite knowledge. God therefore must have all these—goodness, power and knowledge, and yet if He does not respond, what can it be due to? The number of those who feel furiously opposed to an infinitely Good and Powerful God is not negligible. When we see an old father losing his only son, or a young chaste girl losing her husband in the prime of youth, when we see good men suffering and bad men prospering, when we see earthquakes and epidemics, floods, fires and famines, our reactions are violent. And yet it is obvious that in all such cases we are measuring the Divine Goodness by our standards. It is therefore necessary that before taking revenge on God by denying Him, we become clear about His Goodness, what it is and how it works.

In some religions there is a belief that God created man as the centre of the universe and all other things of the world for his sake. The Goodness of God is sought to be established by pointing out the *teleological* order in the universe, the manner in which God has taken care of every detail of our needs and requirements. It is even promised that God would give much better and choicest objects of enjoyment to His devotees in Heaven. Such a view might be useful in diverting people from the world to God but it cannot be true; because the giving of objects of pleasure cannot be really good as it involves us more and more in worldliness and only strengthens our fetters. It is no doubt spiritually wholesome to think of God as the Giver of our daily bread and it is elevating to love Him and thank Him for that. But at the same time, it is too *anthropomorphic*, not to say *hedonistic*, to think of the Divine Goodness only in terms of our secular life and existence. If this is God's Goodness, what shall we say when it is pointed out that God is not equally good to all as He should be, otherwise why is there suffering, evil and inequality in the world? There must be some good in respect of which God is equally good to all, in spite of apparent inequality and evil.

There is another view which interprets Divine Goodness in terms of moral administration: God for Emmanuel Kant is that Infinite Power who brings about a correlation between virtue and happiness. Here on earth we find that the virtuous are not necessarily happy and

yet if there is justice, they must be so. God is therefore postulated as one who establishes this relation, if not here, it may be hereafter. God is so just, so good that He cannot allow the virtuous to remain unhappy. This view too, inspite of its merits, seems to miss the mark. It is too moralistic (legalistic) to bring out truly the idea of God's Goodness. To think that virtue is in the end rewarded is no doubt necessary for the encouragement of the virtuous although virtue is to be practised for its own sake. But the difficulty is that Kant is unable to explain why, inspite of being Infinitely Powerful, God is not able to make the virtuous happy here on earth. Moreover, if God's Goodness rewards the virtuous with happiness, what does it do to the sinful men ? Does the Divine Goodness not extend to the immoral and the sinful ? Is God not the God of all and Good to all ? There must be some kind of Goodness which is extended equally to the virtuous and the sinful.

Hindu theologies in general and *Śaiva Siddhānta* in particular present a more satisfactory view of God's Goodness. It is held here that we get our daily bread or other objects of this life as the fruits of our Karma, fruits which can be both pleasant and unpleasant. God is not to be blamed for the suffering and inequality found in the world. But although we get everything according to our Karma, God may yet be regarded as the giver of our daily bread, because it is He who arranges the fruits of our Karma in such a way that our whole life becomes pregnant with a purpose; it becomes oriented to the idea of *mala paripāka*. Our whole life, nay the whole series of lives, is directed to help us in the realisation that our pride of being a *kartā* (agent) is false, and God is the only doer. He has no actions of His own; He does everything for us, not in any worldly sense but in an ultimate spiritual sense. As the Siddhāntin puts it, creation is for the *paripāka* of *āṇava-mala*, sustenance for the *paripāka* of *māyā-mala* and dissolution for the *paripāka* of *karma-mala*.² Pleasure and pain are equally good though in different ways; both happy and unhappy souls are equally heading towards the same goal though in diverse ways, and God as the Presiding Deity is helping equally the sinful and virtuous both in His own inscrutable way. Those theologies that do not believe in the law of Karma do not realise that diversity of fortunes cannot be explained in any other way without making God appear as not equally good to all. But even the acceptance

2. Vide *Tiruvārūṭpayan*, Ch. 1, 4.

of the law of Karma alone is not enough³; what is necessary is the acceptance of a transcendent purpose behind that, a purpose which God has in view while making use of that law. The law of Karma is nothing but immanent Divine Grace, and happiness and unhappiness are only incidental. God's ways are inscrutable; we are not to conceive His Goodness in terms of empirical experiences. The *Bhāgavat* tells us that if the Lord is pleased with a man, He deprives him of his possessions and dear ones so that He may devote his attention exclusively to Him. At the same time the *Gītā* tells us that there are *ārta* and *arthārthī* bhaktas to whose needs the Lord attends. In fact He promises to shoulder the whole responsibility of the man who makes Him his shelter and leaves everything to Him.⁴ So the point is not that God gives us food or keeps us hungry, gives us pleasure or pain but that He does both for the sake of a higher goal, namely, liberation. It is this view alone that can keep our faith in God secure and unshaken at the sight of or experience of evil and inequality.

The moral administration of the universe also is to be understood in the same way.⁵ The rewarding of virtue with happiness is good but not in itself. God is good not only because He gives us happiness but also because He gives us unhappiness; because happiness and unhappiness both serve a higher end. Otherwise God will not be Good when He awards pain and His goodness to all cannot be sustained. The difficulty in Kant is that he does not seem to envisage anything higher than the synthesis of virtue and happiness, nor does he see that even suffering can be good. While it is true that the Lord helps and protects the virtuous, He is Himself beyond morality and sin as these belong to the sphere of the three *guṇas* and He is beyond the *guṇas* (*triguṇātita*). In fact it is because He is *triguṇātita* that He can be equally Good to all, the virtuous and the sinful both, though in different ways. In the *Gītā* the Lord tells us that "there is none hateful to me nor dear",⁶ and yet He also says that the *jñānī* is His very soul, that he incarnates Himself for the sake of the virtuous, that He liberates

3. Jainism and Buddhism accept the law of karma but do not accept a Divine scheme immanent in the Law.

4. *Gītā*, VII, 16.

5. *Gītā*, IX, 22.

6. *Gītā*, IX, 29, also XIII, 28.

us from all sins if we take shelter under Him, that His bhakta is dear to Him and so on. There is no contradiction here as these statements do not mean that He is partial to the virtuous but that He does good to the virtuous in one way and to the sinner in another way. Though apparently siding with the Pāṇḍavas, He gives salvation to both Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas. He is equally good to both.

Unless a goal higher than virtue and sin, happiness and unhappiness is postulated, the Divine Goodness cannot be asserted to be equal in all cases. This higher goal is liberation or freedom from all bondage; it is something transcendent and universal and not empirical. God's Goodness is therefore not to be confused with anything empirical; God is Good in the transcendent or spiritual sense and not in the secular or moral sense. If He does not seem to respond to our prayers or to help the needy and the virtuous, it is because unlike us, He aims not at our happiness or morality here but at something higher. He cannot help all of us in attaining that higher goal in one uniform way, as each one of us has his own stock of karmas. If we understand Divine Goodness not in this light but in terms of moral good and secular happiness, then atheism and scepticism will be chronic and inevitable; there will be no way of reconciling evil and suffering with the infinite power and Goodness of God. But if we take the one as empirical and the other as transcendent then there will be no conflict; the conflict arises only if the two are taken to be of the same level or order, i. e., empirical. So even if God does not give us our daily bread, even if the virtuous suffer, even if there is colossal suffering, the Divine Goodness shines as ever. We should remember that not only materialism but also moralism may obstruct our faith in the Divine Goodness.

Divine Goodness therefore must be of the transcendental order and being transcendental it must also be universal. God is not only Good to all; He is purely Good and nothing else; He can do nothing which involves us in the mire of worldiness howsoever much we may pray to Him for that. God alone is Good because He alone is eternally free. He is infinitely Good as there can be no limits to His doing good to us; He gives His all. He is constantly and continuously Good; there is no break or gap. Like the sun, the Divine Goodness shines

on all, equally, infinitely and always. He is always with us and with all of us. God's Grace is both immanent and transcendent.

God is Good not because He is the Creator, nor because He is the Sustainer, nor because He is the Destroyer of the Universe, nor because He gives us our daily bread, nor because He rewards virtue with happiness, but because He *does all this* for our ultimate good, namely, our Freedom. We love Him not because He is Powerful but because He exercises His Power for our good, the ultimate good of all. In this perspective of Divine Goodness all other perspectives get merged.

OMINISCIENCE (SARVAJÑATVA)†

Almost all the major religions of the world accept the possibility of omniscience, i. e. the possibility of some one knowing everything. Omniscience is taken to be a part of perfection. One may not believe in God, but if one does, one must believe, it is argued, that God is omniscient. Neither the practice of infinite goodness nor the exercise of infinite power is possible without omniscience. The Governor of the universe must be omniscient. Jainism and Buddhism do not accept a creator God, but do hold that man can attain omniscience.

I

Notwithstanding the great significance of the concept of omniscience, certain very difficult questions arise here and give rise to scepticism. What does omniscience exactly mean and what are its implications? Is it or is it not possible for man also to attain omniscience? Is this concept indispensable for religion? Is the acceptance of omniscience based purely on faith or is it possible to give a rational justification for its acceptance? These are some of the questions that we propose to take up in this paper.

The meaning of omniscience in the context of religion is the knowledge of all the constituents of the universe belonging to its past, present and future. It is in this sense that man who is finite lacks omniscience. God can exercise providence only if He knows everything about everything. Even if a creator God and His providence are not

† Printed in Dr. Bhagavan Das Centenary Volume by Kashi Vidyapeetha, 1969.

accepted, it is necessary to believe in omniscience so long as we accept a trans-empirical goal of our life. The highest good or goal of life, truth, can be known only to one who knows everything. This is why the teachers of Jainism and Buddhism are taken to be omniscient beings. Finite knowledge cannot take us to a transcendent goal, or truth. Omniscience is therefore an indispensable concept for every religion which promises a trans-empirical destiny to man. One cannot go beyond hedonism and morality without accepting the teaching of an omniscient being.

It would appear that so far as God is concerned, omniscience cannot be doubted. Doubt arises only when omniscience is attributed to man. How can a finite being be omniscient? But really speaking, if we come to think of it, the omniscience of God is no less difficult to accept than that of man. The very possibility of omniscience is questionable. How can anyone including God be omniscient? How can the infinite future and no less infinite past be known to anyone? Does not the infinite knowledge of God go against our freedom of will? If we look at the history of semitic religions, there seems to be going on a see-saw between the acceptance of utter predestination and that of the freedom of will. Some thinkers emphasise the one, while others the other. In the medieval period of western thought a different kind of difficulty regarding the omniscience of God was raised. It was asked whether God knows the universals only or the particulars also. If God is to exercise providence, He must know the particulars also. But in order to know the particulars, God Himself should be a particular; only a particular can know a particular. So those who were more inclined to Platonism thought that God could know only the universals. But in that case, how is the exercise of providence possible?

In Indian philosophy also similar objections to the possibility of omniscience have been raised. The *Mimāṃsā* argues that God must have sense-organs in order to be able to know the particular things of the world, and if He has sense organs He must have a body and be like anyone of us. Even if it is allowed that God has a body, it is not conceivable, how He can have organs that can see everything? Even if He has infinite sense organs, how can He see the past and the future? We are told that sometimes the claim to omniscience is ridiculed by Buddhists also and "Buddha is represented as denying that he claims

such omniscience."¹ Even a theist like Udayanācārya seems to have misgivings about the omniscience of God and asks whether He knows the illusory cognitions of human beings. Śaṅkara too ridicules the realists conception of an omniscient God (Br. Sūtra Bhāṣya II, ii, 41). He argues that if souls and objects are apart from God, they would put a limit to His omniscience.

II

All the difficulties mentioned above concerning the possibility of omniscience seem to emanate from a realistic and pluralistic conception of the universe. If the world with its plurality of souls and objects is real, then it is difficult to imagine how anyone can be omniscient, specially God, who is not a corporeal being. A realistic conception of the world gives us a false conception of God, because it makes God one thing among other things. Such a God cannot be omniscient. God must be conceived, as Paul Tillich has rightly emphasised, as the ground of everything rather than as one thing among other things. Realism fails to see this point.

Although these are serious difficulties in conceiving omniscience in the numerical sense, that is, in the sense of knowledge of all particulars, yet it is in this sense that it is accepted of God in all theistic religions of the world; there can be no providence without the knowledge of all infinite details. So we are in a dilemma. Reason finds it difficult to accept omniscience in the numerical sense and yet all religions find it necessary to accept it. The solution of the problem lies in the recognition of the fact that religion is by nature realistic and is sustained primarily by faith. Being realistic and hence pluralistic religion can accept only the numerical or quantitative conception of omniscience, but the acceptance is based not on reason but on faith only; faith can accept even what is baffling or mysterious to reason. In fact faith is needed and is relevant just where reason fails. In religion faith is claimed to solve all such difficulties which reason cannot. So the religious conception of omniscience need not be regarded as valueless; only it should not be put forward as a rational doctrine.

1. E. J. Thomas, *History of Buddhist Thought*, 1935, P. 148.

The realism of religion is understandable. It is not a rational search or critical enquiry; it begins with the experience of a higher power or reality. It is round that experience as the centre that a system of dogmas is woven. So religion is positive and pluralistic in its outlook. Religion does not regard God as the essence of everything but as the highest power presiding over the lower regions of reality, regions which are not to be regarded as appearances but as the creation of God. For religion God is real because the world is real. Religion adjusts its conception of God to the reality of the world through faith. To sustain and to deepen religious devotion, certain articles of faith are necessary. God is an infinite Person. He is infinitely good. Infinite goodness is possible only when there is infinite knowledge and infinite power. Man is finite, ignorant and impotent and so wholly dependent on God.

III

Philosophy must be distinguished from religion because it is essentially critical and reflective; it starts with some kind of disillusionment. Incipient doubt concerning the reality of the world is characteristic of philosophy and so it is not dogmatic but critical in its attitude. Philosophy is a search and not an experience that religion is; it is a search for the essence or truth of everything. The search will end either with the conviction that things do not have any inner essence or truth, or with the discovery of the latter. The former is scepticism and the latter is absolutism. These are the two basic approaches in philosophy, and both are different from religion.

If the above distinction between philosophy and religion be accepted, then the question arises; Is there a philosophic conception of omniscience which is not based on faith but on understanding? Is there or not an alternative to the numerical or quantitative conception of omniscience? It may well be that a different conception of omniscience is not only free from the difficulties that arose concerning the religious conception of omniscience, but also opens up the prospect of human omniscience. It seems to us that such a conception of omniscience which may be rightly termed philosophic is found in the Upaniṣads.

In the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (I, i, 3) a very direct question about omniscience has been asked, "Kasminnu bhagavo vijñāte sarvavidam

vijñātaṁ bhavati.” (What is that by knowing which all this becomes known ?) If we analyse the question we find two things. Firstly, the expression *sarvamidaṁ* (all this) has been used and secondly, the questioner assumes that there is some single thing by knowing which everything becomes known, because the expression *Kasmin* is singular. The answer to the question given in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* (IV, 5, 6,) confirms the above analysis, because it has been said that it is by knowing the self that everything becomes known. The reason is that the self is the self of everything (*ātmā sarvasya ātmā*). The implication of this question-answer is that omniscience or knowledge of everything is possible only in this qualitative or essential sense. The essence of everything is one and so by knowing that essence we can know everything. Omniscience would not be possible if things did not have any underlying unity (essence) or if that essence were something different from the self. Since the self and the essence of all things is identical, one can know everything by knowing the self. Omniscience is possible according to the *Upaniṣads* not in the sense of knowing the plurality and diversity of things but in the sense of knowing the unity present in all of them. This view not only makes omniscience intelligible but also explains the concept of *sarvaprāpti* (Ch. Up. VIII, 12 (6)). The knower of self is said to attain everything. Obviously the attainment of everything in the literal sense is impossible, and so it should be understood in the manner of omniscience in the qualitative or qualitative sense only.

Further, this view of omniscience which depends on the acceptance of an underlying reality in the universe would make the numerical conception of omniscience also more reasonable. If the Divine Being is conceived as the ground of everything—all reality and all knowledge, then the Divine must necessarily know everything in the sense that He illumines everything (*Yasya bhāsā sarvamidaṁ Vibhāti*). A God who is wholly other and who does not pervade everything can be regarded as omniscient only in some mysterious way. But the immanent view of the Divine takes off the mystery. Again, by taking the immanent view of reality, we can explain omnipotence also in the same manner; God is omnipotent being the source of all power, as He is omniscient being the source of all light or knowledge.

If we accept the above meaning of omniscience, it is possible to accept omniscience on the basis of understanding and not merely on

the basis of faith. Further, it is possible to accept the prospect of human omniscience too. This kind of omniscience does not need an infinite intellect like that of God. Omniscience so conceived is not infinite knowledge but true knowledge; it is based on insight and understanding. The distinction between omniscience and the lack of it is a qualitative distinction in knowledge and not a quantitative distinction; the difference is in depth and not in extent. This is why a qualitative change in life, the adoption of a certain direction or inwardisation and not any expansion of knowledge is needed for the realization of this kind of omniscience.

IV

From the above it would follow that the question of human omniscience is related to the question whether a system of philosophy does or does not accept the distinction between appearance and reality. Human omniscience is possible only in that philosophy in which this distinction is admitted and an underlying all-pervasive reality is held to be the core of all appearance. So human omniscience is quite intelligible in systems like Advaita Vedānta and Mahāyāna Buddhism. But we are puzzled when we find that realists like the Jaina and the Yoga philosophers too believe in the possibility of human omniscience. As realists, they can accept omniscience only in the literal or numerical sense, but then, that kind of omniscience cannot be possible for man. If realism is retained, omniscience is not possible for all, and if omniscience for all is possible then realism and pluralism must go. Omniscience is anomalous in Jainism and Yoga. The objections of the Mīmāṃsakas against the possibility of human omniscience seem to be quite pertinent so far as the Yogic and Jaina conceptions are concerned. They argue that even a Yogi cannot know everything, because his sense-organs are limited to time and space. Even if Yoga magnifies the powers of the sense organs, they cannot have infinite power, and even if they acquire infinite power they cannot know the past and the future. In other words, omniscience in the literal sense cannot be accepted purely on rational grounds; and a rational or philosophic view of omniscience is not quantitative or literal but qualitative and is based on some kind of absolutism.

The qualitative conception of omniscience is immune to the criticisms of Mīmāṃsakas and sceptics alike. Their criticism is

valid only if knowledge means knowledge of particular empirical objects. But if knowledge means transcending the realm of the empirical, then the above objections fall to the ground. All that one can say is that there is no such thing as the transcendent or the absolute and so there is no such thing as omniscience. This is as good as accepting the empirical itself as the absolute. Moreover, it would mean that no man in the world has so far known the truth. But to say this is to assume a great responsibility. Leaders of the different religions of the world are regarded as knowers of truth and truth cannot be known unless everything is known in some sense. If man knows truth it can be only if he knows everything, and he can know everything only in the qualitative sense and not in the quantitative sense. Unless we are prepared to reject the whole spiritual tradition of man, it has got to be admitted that there have been human knowers of truth and this admission implies the possibility of omniscience in the qualitative or transcendental sense.

V

We conclude then that omniscience is not of one kind, but of two kinds—empirical or the quantitative and the transcendent or the qualitative. The former is an article of faith and is indispensable for a theistic religion, but it is not possible for man to have that kind of omniscience. The latter is the philosophic conception of omniscience and is necessarily related to some kind of absolutism. Those who combine the concept of omniscience with some kind of realism and pluralism seem to confuse philosophy and religion. Philosophy neither takes omniscience in the literal sense nor the finitude of man as ultimate, and so accepts the possibility of omniscience in the case of man also.

THE CONCEPT OF MĀYĀ†

We will speak of appearance first, because in understanding the concept of *māyā*, the basic issue is the relation between appearance and reality. It will also enable us to take up the question in a broader perspective.

Appearance is what is apparently given and is rejected in favour of what is behind the apparent i. e. the real. Every system of philosophy discards some belief or experience as only apparent; even to hold that the apparent is itself the real implies a negation of the incipient suspicion that the apparent may not be real. Therefore there can be no philosophy without rejection and to this extent it is obligatory for every philosophy to be concerned with the question of the relation between the apparent and the real. This obligation cannot be put off by saying that the primary aim of philosophy is to discover reality and not to indulge in speculation regarding the fortunes of the unreal or the rejected. No doubt, reality has to be discovered but one has also to make sure that the unreal which once posed to be real does not stage a return to dethrone the real again. One has got to ask the question whether the discovery of the real destroys the unreal or merely sets it aside, and whether the relation between the two is necessary or accidental.

The importance of the above question is well brought out by a consideration of the views of Bradley and Nāgārjuna who hold two extreme positions regarding the relation between appearance and reality,

† Printed in Indian Philosophical Annual C. A. S. P. (Madras University), 1966,

Both these philosophers employ the dialectical method and show that the whole apparatus of thought gives mere appearance, as thought is through and through self-contradictory. But their agreement ends here and they come to two opposite conclusions regarding the Absolute and its relation to appearance. If for Bradley appearance is constitutive of the Absolute, for Nāgārjuna the Absolute is wholly beyond appearance.

Nāgārjuna argues that a view is false not because some other view is true, but because it is inherently self-contradictory. As all thought is vitiated by self-contradiction, the *tattva* cannot be comprehended under any view and is therefore wholly transcendent. If one were to argue that what is wholly beyond thought would be as good as nothing, Nāgārjuna would rejoin that the *tattva* being nothing for thought does not mean that it is nothing in itself. To escape the inconsistencies of thought the *tattva* must transcend it. Not that there are two spheres, one of appearance and the other of reality; reality is the reality of appearance. One gets at *tattva* only by negating appearance which conceals it. The Mādhyamika is not chary of admitting *tattva* but only of describing it in positive terms and of theorising about its relation to appearance. This is because all views are abjured.

On the other hand Bradley is convinced that reality cannot be absolutely transcendent. Whatever is rejected 'is no mere non-entity' and 'cannot be bodily shelved and merely got rid of'; appearances 'must fall somewhere and must belong to reality.' 'Reality must own and cannot be less than the appearance.' Nor can Reality be more than appearance, because "The Absolute has no assets beyond appearances." There is nothing which is too mean or too low to find a place in the Absolute.

It is obvious that Nāgārjuna and Bradley represent two extreme views regarding the relation between appearance and reality. For Nāgārjuna reality is wholly transcendent to appearances; for Bradley reality is wholly immanent; for the former appearance conceals (*āvaraṇa*) reality; for the latter appearances reveal and constitute reality. For Nāgārjuna, there is no relation between appearance and reality, but for Bradley there is necessary relation. For the former no experience is cognitive and for the latter all experiences are cognitive; but on the other hand the Absolute is for Nāgārjuna knowable in immediate experience (*prajñā*) while for Bradley the Absolute can never be wholly known to us, finite centres of experience.

Though holding opposite views, both Nāgārjuna and Bradley seem to suffer from the same malady. For both the nature of appearance is determined purely on a formal ground i. e. self-contradiction. Dialectic no doubt demonstrates the self-discrepancy of all concepts but the question is : wherefrom do we get the notions of truth and falsity ? To be able to declare that concepts are either utterly false or true, it is necessary that we should be already in possession of these notions. After all, all thought is false or all thought is true is not an analytic proposition. Bradley and Nāgārjuna exploit our notions or experiences of truth and falsity but do not care to examine how we get those notions. "If a given object turns into illusion, it is by fact and not by any necessity of thought."¹ Illusion is not merely a logical error. If thought is self-discrepant, how is it false ? It may well be that inconsistency is the nature of reality; it may also be that there is no reality beyond thought; one can even say that though reality is beyond thought it cannot be known. No wonder therefore that from the same premise that thought is self-contradictory Nāgārjuna and Bradley draw opposite conclusion; Kant and Hegel again hold some other views regarding the status of thought. One may ask Bradley : if thought is self-contradictory, how does it follow that consistency is the mark of reality ? Nāgārjuna may be asked the question : if thought is self-contradictory, how does it follow that it is *false* or that reality is wholly beyond ? If mere inconsistency were the mark of falsity, then there would be no need of the knowledge of *tattva* to realize the falsity of all views.

Further, both Nāgārjuna and Bradley seem to reduce all functions of consciousness to thought. Bradley does admit that there are other functions such as willing and feeling beside thought, but he fails to see that the acceptance of consistency as the criterion of reality reduces all reality to thought, because consistency can be found only in thought. For Nāgārjuna, everything is thought; dialectic cannot operate except in the sphere of thought. Since all experience is thought, all experience is vitiated by self-contradiction. Serious difficulties arise if all functions of consciousness are reduced to thought. To begin with, either every thought will be true or every thought will be false, and in either case there will not be even a possibility of the consciousness of truth and falsity. For the possibility of the emergence of the

1. K. C. Bhattacharya—*Śaṅkara's Doctrine of Māyā*.

consciousness of truth and falsity, two levels must be distinguished in *our experience itself*; the distinction between the *vyāvahārika* and the *prātibhāsika* is necessary. Again, if everything is thought, then there will be no distinction between knowledge and imagination or belief; confusion between cognition and what is not cognition is possible only if there are functions other than cognition. If there were only knowledge or only willing or only feeling, there would be no confusion.²

For every philosophy that accepts the distinction of appearance and reality, two things seem to be absolutely necessary. Firstly, for the very emergence of the consciousness of truth and falsity, we must accept at least two levels in experience itself; one-level view of experience whether empiricism or idealism will not do. Secondly, for the very possibility of the confusion between real and unreal, functions of consciousness other than merely cognitive must be admitted. Both these points seem to have been ignored by both Nāgārjuna and Bradley, because they do not seem to learn anything from the experience of perceptual illusion. Cancellation of illusion reveals not only two levels of experience but also the presence of non-cognitive elements in experience.

The peculiar view of appearance taken by Nāgārjuna and Bradley affects also their conception of the Absolute. Bradley's worst defect is that he makes the Absolute so immanent that the Absolute becomes relative to appearance and ceases to remain absolute. In the case of Nāgārjuna, reality is so transcendent that it seems to be completely foreign (*alika*). If there is no point where the Absolute touches appearance (if every element of experience is rejected), there will be no surety that we will reach the Absolute by negating appearances. And if there is nothing beyond appearances we will have Bradley. The Absolute must be our very self though not the empirical self, otherwise it will be either wholly immanent or wholly transcendent. Not that Bradley does not admit transcendence nor that Nāgārjuna does not admit immanence; our point is that transcendence and immanence are not shown in our experience itself.

We arrive at two conclusions from the above analysis; the Absolute must neither be wholly immanent (as in Bradley) nor wholly

2. T. R. V. Murti—*Illusion as the Confusion of Subjective Functions*; *Philosophical Quarterly*.

transcendent (as in Nāgārjuna) but both. Appearances must neither be constitutive of reality nor should they completely lack any touch of reality. This is abundantly brought out in the Advaitic analysis of illusion. The snake does not affect the rope at all but the rope is necessary for the appearance of the snake. If Nāgārjuna does not clearly admit an *adhiṣṭhāna* or ground of appearances, it is firstly because he confines himself only to thought and does not consider perceptual experience, and secondly because he is afraid of indulging in a view. He does not seem to see that unless appearances are identified with the Absolute, they will not be really appearances and their rejection will not yield the Absolute³. If Bradley does not admit transcendence, it is because he is afraid of a notion like the thing-in-itself, little realizing that his Absolute itself must ultimately be the thing-in-itself and not the thing as it appears to us. So while the Absolute must be free from appearances, appearances must be related to the Absolute. Appearance cannot be real or independent, and the real cannot be dependent. If the snake also were real we could not have cancellation and if the rope also were unreal, its knowledge would have been unnecessary for cancellation.

Falsity therefore is not mere inconsistency but cancellation or *bādha*. Cancellation is not merely the succession of one idea after another; it is also evaluation and rejection and so it means the rise of a higher consciousness. Further, *bādha* is not the destruction of a thing but only of a false appearance; an object or a thing cannot be destroyed by anything much less by knowledge. It cannot be said that the snake is not destroyed, because that would militate against its falsity; the snake does not reinstate itself again somewhere else. And if the snake is destroyed by knowledge, it must be something different from reality on the one hand and non-being on the other. This intermediary being is no doubt a 'standing scandal to thought' and that is why Bradley does not want to admit it, though he realizes that "error obstinately refuses to be either" non-existence or reality. But if the very experience (perceptual illusion) in which we come to know falsity and truth forces the acceptance of the indescribable or the *anirvacanīya* we have got to admit it; the false is neither being nor non-being, but *anirvacanīya*.

3. '...the Absolute is nowhere shown to be in things constituting their very soul.....This may be said to constitute a drawback in the Mādhyamika conception of the Absolute'. T. R. V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* p. 237.

The fundamental question is not how or why appearance is there but whether it is really there, whether it is integral to reality.

The false then is at once related and not related to the real; the snake is related to the rope in the sense that but for the ignorance of the rope it could not appear, and is not related in the sense that it does not in anyway affect the rope. Ignorance is never mere ignorance, it is always *of* something, and since it is *of* something it has the power to present something; ignorance is not mere blank; there is both *āvaraṇa* and *vikṣepa*. *Avidyā* though not *bhāva* is at least *bhāva-rūpa*.

On the analogy of the rope-snake everything that is presented apparently may be regarded as false (*dṛśyatvātmithyā*). A cosmic ignorance to explain the appearance of the cosmos may be presupposed. Since the Absolute is free from change and plurality, our experience of change and plurality must be traced to something else and yet it must not be real, otherwise it will affect the Absolute. It can only be due to ignorance. In the case of the rope-snake, the snake is known as an effect of ignorance only when the rope is known. In the same way, the cosmic appearance can be known to be due to ignorance only when its underlying reality is known; till then it remains a hypothesis, a hypothesis like the one that Kant made regarding the *a priori* conditions of knowledge. Cosmic ignorance like the *a priori* being transcendental can be pointed out only as a presupposition. The basic condition of the experience of change and plurality must be transcendental (*avyaktā hi sāmāyā*) as it is neither knowable nor removable by any empirical means of knowledge; but though transcendental it must be removable in the long run as it is only a condition of experience and not a part of reality.

The cosmic root of all appearance may be looked upon in two ways. From the point of the Absolute or reality, appearance is the free phenomenalisation of the Absolute, that is, it has no power to affect the real. It is merely the *māyā* of the Absolute. From the point of view of the subject, however, it is the *a priori* condition of all experience of change and plurality. Being *a priori* it is only epistemic but not empirical. The possibility of the complete and final removal of the transcendent condition of experience must necessarily be a matter of faith. But this faith is not groundless as the very absoluteness or freedom of the Absolute demands that this transcendental condition or *māyā* should be capable of removal, otherwise it would become a part

of the Absolute. Metaphysically *māyā* is the freedom of the Absolute, while epistemically it is the transcendental condition of experience; it has to be rent in order that the un-conditioned may be known. Kant did not visualize the possibility of freedom from the *a priori* conditions of knowledge as he did not take into consideration *śruti* as a source of knowledge; Vedānta has *śruti-bala*.

In theistic and semi-absolutistic systems such as Viśiṣṭādvaita and Kashmir Śaivism the freedom of the Absolute is understood as volitional freedom and so *māyā* is regarded as the *śakti* of the Absolute; that is why these systems are realistic. But unless freedom is understood in the ontological sense i.e., not freedom for but freedom from, the transcendence of the Absolute will be in danger. In fact, even freedom in the volitional sense is possible only to the extent there is ontological freedom. The ontological freedom of the Absolute alone can reduce the appearance to an utterly epistemic status, it alone can reduce Divine Causality to mere *vivarta*, which is necessary for safeguarding the absoluteness of the Absolute.

The nature of *māyā* must be complex and not simple because it has to perform three functions, the function of projecting appearance, that of sustaining it and also that of destroying it. Hence *māyā* is *triguṇātmaka*. The *rajas* projects appearance, the *tamas* sustains it and the *sattva* enables us to go beyond it. It is remarkable that unless *māyā* had in it an element which took us beyond it nothing could help; there is a kind of self-transcendence in *māyā*. Hence going beyond *māyā* is possible only with the help of *māyā*, though not of *māyā* alone because there can be no such thing as *māyā* alone. *Māyā* binds us but it also liberates us; it conceals as well as reveals. But with all this, *māyā* must not be anything independent; otherwise it will become absolute; in fact its very dependence is its falsity; only the false can be a dependent or a product.

Hence we conclude that *māyā* is neither being nor non-being but a necessary presupposition, the transcendental or *a priori* condition of experience or appearance, a point specially to be asserted against Bradley. As against Nāgārjuna, we may say that *māyā* is the freedom or the free phenomenalisation of the Absolute, an appearance of the

Absolute which is not in the least integral to the Absolute. If *māyā* as an epistemic medium is not admitted, then appearances will affect the absoluteness of the Absolute, and if appearance as the free phenomenalisation of the Absolute is not admitted, the Absolute will be wholly transcendent. In relation to us *māyā* seems to be *āvaraṇa* and in relation to the Absolute it seems to be *vikṣepa* but really it is both because we are one with the Absolute which is both immanent and transcendent.

KARMA AND REBIRTH†

Karma and Rebirth are among the most important concepts of Indian Philosophy. These concepts are accepted unanimously by all the systems excepting the Cārvākas, with little or no discussion at all, notwithstanding considerable differences regarding other concepts, even regarding the concept of self. This general acceptance of these concepts may be regarded as the distinctive feature of Indian Spirituality. In Western religions we do not find any explicit recognition of these doctrines, though implicit references may be detected in such statements as "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The lack of these doctrines in Western religions is a source of problems that are difficult to solve.

I

To take up the doctrine of Karma first. In spite of the fact that this doctrine is unanimously accepted in Indian systems, there are two extreme views regarding the importance of Karma. According to one view, chiefly of the Mīmāṃsakas, the highest goal of life can be attained only by doing the right types of Karma. But according to the other view, chiefly of the Sāṃkhya and Vedānta, the highest goal of life can be attained only after renouncing Karma. According to the former view, Karma for which knowledge is but a means, is the only way for everybody, while according to the other view, Karma is meant only for second rate people not fit for the highest goal which can be attained only by knowledge or *Jñāna* for which very few are really fit. To be

† Printed in Indian Philosophical Annual C. A. S. P. (Madras University) 1965.

able to assess the situation, it is necessary to examine the nature of *Karma* and all that it implies.

To begin with, *Karma* is a concept which is not intelligible without reference to spirit. *Karma* is not mere movement; it involves the notion of will or capacity for choosing to do or not to do or to do something differently. This capacity is essentially a spiritual or non-material quality. A materialist therefore who accepts nothing but matter cannot legitimately talk of *Karma*, as matter does not have the above property, and if it is taken to have it then matter is nothing but spirit. To say that matter can produce something which is non-mechanical with non-material properties, is to give up materialism. So *Karma* takes us to a sphere which, in the words of Kant, may be called the kingdom of ends, a non-material or spiritual sphere.

That *Karma* requires an agent capable of willing an end introduces us to the metaphysical aspect of the question, namely, the question regarding the nature of spirit or soul. Is it the essential nature of spirit to be active or to be a *Kartā* or is it only an accident? Here we come across two conceptions. According to one view, agency necessarily belongs to the soul. This view is advocated by the *Mīmāṃsā* in India and the different religions in the West. That is why *Karma* is emphasised by the former and morality by the latter. But in fairness to the Western religions it must be pointed out that in spite of their emphasis on morality and virtue, it is admitted by them that salvation is by the Grace of God and not purely by one's *Karma*. However there is clear agreement regarding the view that the soul is dynamic and active by nature.

According to the other view, the Soul or Spirit is active only under certain contingencies and not essentially; the essential nature of Spirit is to be self-contained, because that is the sign of perfection. It is possible only for an imperfect being to will an end and thus to do a *Karma*. A perfect being whose all ends are eternally attained can have no *Karma*, as all *Karma* is meant for achieving an end. But if spirit as perfect being cannot act then it would be as dead as matter. To this it may be replied that the distinction is that while Spirit is unmoved mover, matter is not. Spirit though not itself moving can be the source of motion, but matter cannot be. Pure spirit when in association with matter or in bondage seems to be active though really it is not. *Karma* therefore is a sign of imperfection and is

possible only for man and not for pure spirit; man is both matter and spirit, and Karma is due to the association of spirit with matter; neither pure spirit nor pure matter can act; the former would not and the latter could not. The Lord tells Arjuna, "There is nothing in the three worlds, O Pārtha, that should be done by Me nor anything unattained that might be attained...".¹ Man too thinks of himself as an agent only due to folly born of egoity.² In order to be an agent even the Lord has to take birth, i. e. he has to be associated with matter as an incarnation. Could God preach like Christ or kill Rāvaṇa like Rāma without being born? Karma requires bipolarity which is an essential characteristic of man, a being having aspirations which neither matter nor God can have. There is no karma possible in the vegetable or the animal kingdom either; they are too near matter. It is possible only for one who is at the stage of transition; for one who has aspiration, i. e. man. This shows the spiritual significance of karma. From the standpoint of absolute spirit, capacity for karma is a fall while from the standpoint of mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, the capacity for Karma is a mark of evolution, a relative detachment from matter. Hence though karma is possible only for the imperfect it is a sign of going towards perfection.

Karma requires an imperfect spirit or soul, but the idea of an imperfect spirit seems to be self-contradictory. Both in India and the west the idea of an imperfect spirit has been admitted. Indian systems remove the contradiction by suggesting that the imperfection is only accidental and can be removed by knowledge. But the contradiction persists in the western religions because the imperfection of the soul is taken to be essential and real. Under the circumstances the soul can never attain perfection according to western religions.

All karma is due to aspiration after something, the attainment of which should lead to a cessation of karma, but ironically enough Karma is never able to lead to a cessation of Karma. The reason is well known: Karma can never achieve anything permanent; all fruits of Karma are impermanent as everything that has a beginning has an inevitable end; one has to come down even after attaining *Svarga*. Man's hopes to achieve permanent happiness by acquiring objects through Karma are naturally frustrated; man gets only temporary,

1. Gītā. III. 22.

2. Ibid., III, 27

if any, happiness and succeeds only in developing attachments or *Vāsanā* or the desire to have those objects again and again. The frustration of the desire for permanent happiness coupled with attachment for objects makes for rebirth. Matter-bound souls attached to material objects have to go through incarnation after incarnation till they turn either to God or to the self in search of happiness. It must be noted that it is not merely the doing of Karma that gives rise to rebirth (bondage and suffering) but the attachment for fruits. This is why the Lord says that *Niškāma Karma* is as good as no Karma; for the same reason the Lord is not subject to bondage even though He does Karma (*na me karma phale spṛhā*)³. Karma with a desire for fruits is due to a double illusion, namely, the illusion that by doing Karma one is sure to get the fruit and the illusion that the fruit would make one happy. The *Gītā* asks us to get rid of both those beliefs. If spirit seeks satisfaction from matter, it can only be due to ignorance or illusion (*ajñānām karma saṅginām*). In terms of Christianity this illusion may be called the original sin. No less false is the belief that the finite individual can have such control over events as can bring about the results he wants. Only Karma is in our capacity and not the fruits thereof⁴.

For the believer in God who is not a *jñāni*, i. e. who does not regard the world as illusory, there is an apparent difficulty. Is it not a cruel joke or a mockery that God should place man in such a position that while he has the urge or the capacity to do karma, it is neither in his power to get the fruits he wants nor is it in his lot to get permanent happiness from the fruits that he gets? To place man in a situation in which he goes on involving himself in karma does not seem to reflect the goodness of God, and yet it does. It is only by experiencing frustrations repeatedly in achieving results that man can learn that he is not the real doer, that some other power is at the helm of affairs. Man can realise his impotence only by acting and failing. Similarly it is only by suffering that man can turn away from objects. The Lord arranges things in such a manner that we may realise this truth, and that is His Goodness. Thus the law of Karma is nothing but immanent Divine Grace. It is not to be mistaken for the law of reward and punishment. Grace in Hinduism like its God, is both

3. *Gītā*, IV, 14.

4. *Ibid*, II, 47.

immanent and transcendent. But for God's Grace man cannot turn from the material objects to self or God, nor can he realise his impotence.

II

The law of karma is related to the doctrine of rebirth through the doctrine of *Vāsanā*. It is *vāsanā* or desire for material enjoyment which binds the soul to matter. If it is not admitted that Karma is due to the desire for the enjoyment of objects or *Vāsanā*, then not only rebirth is not possible but even birth is not possible; there can be no ostensible reason for the pure soul to come into the world of matter or to associate itself with a body unless it be due to some basic illusion or *vāsanā*; otherwise creation would be a mere fiat of God. But if the doctrine of *Vāsanā* is admitted then not only is birth made possible but rebirth becomes inevitable for the liquidation of *Vāsanā*. Indian religions which are all based on the concept of *Vāsanā* and *Samśkāra* have the doctrine of rebirth as essential to them. This doctrine is not only organic to Indian Spirituality but is also its distinctive characteristic. We can disregard this doctrine only at the cost of being a non-Hindu or non-Buddhist or non-Jaina and accepting one of the Western religions in which its importance is not properly felt. Not to regard it as organic to our religions would be a fantastic way of achieving unity (uniformity?) of all religions. Even a Christian is able to say as follows. "The idea that aeons are needed for the development of each individual man is one which is still foreign to the Western mind. That a single earth life, or a fraction of a life on earth (for it is never too late for the sinner to repent and be "saved") can fit the soul for "eternal life", can fit it, in other words, either for immediate admission into the pure light of God's unclouded presence or for entrance into the Purgatorial world which is the ante-room of Heaven—this with the correlative belief that one brief earthlife can earn for a man the tremendous penalty of eternal damnation, is one of the accepted doctrines of all the Christian Churches."⁵ Supporting the doctrine of rebirth Edmond Holmes says further,⁶ "The obvious fact that in one earth life man can learn but little of what earth has to teach him, and the further fact that most men die with the desire for the goods and pleasures of earth still strong

5. Edmond Holmes, *The Creed of Buddha*, p. 30.

6. *Ibid.* p. 31.

in their hearts, lead one to expect (once the idea of plurality of lives has been accepted) that the soul...will return to earth again and again..." Kant also hinted that the ideal of morality could not be attained in one life but it did not occur to him that the possibility of attainment requires not merely the immortality of the soul but also its reincarnation in the world. How else could the soul grow ?

However important the doctrine of rebirth may be, can it be proved ? And if not, how to accept it ? Not only that science does not lend support to it but even most of the major religions do not accept it. It may be at once pointed out that it is as wrong to try to seek to support this doctrine on the basis of science as to reject it on that basis. It is not a scientific question and so science has no *locus standi* in this matter; science can neither accept nor reject this doctrine legitimately. Enthusiasts of either kind are mistaken. Nor can the issue be decided by taking votes of different religions. Those anxious for proof must know how far and how many of the religious dogmas can be proved. Can any of the dogmas of Christianity be conclusively proved ? Stray cases of the memory of past lives of which we occasionally read in the newspapers only confirm our belief in the doctrine of rebirth if the belief is already there; they do not prove anything. The doctrine must necessarily remain an article of faith for those who are not yogis like Buddha capable of seeing far into the past and into the future. Such truths as the doctrine of rebirth are revealed truths and so all that we should expect is that they should not be anti-rational and not that they should be rationally proved.⁷

The law of karma along with the doctrine of rebirth has the merit of solving one great problem of philosophy and religion, a problem which is a headache to the western religions and which finds no satisfactory solution in them. The problem is : How is it that different persons are born with an infinite diversity regarding their fortunes in spite of the fact that God is equally good to all ? It would be nothing short of denying God to say that He is whimsical. If God is all-Goodness and also All-Powerful, how is it that there is so much evil and inequality in the world ? Indian religions relieve God of this

7. Ninian Smart thinks that no proof of this doctrine was attempted because no school of Indian Philosophy except Cārvākas questioned it and the Cārvākas were soon wiped out. Little does he imagine that no proof need be given.

responsibility and make our *karmas* responsible.* Western religions leave the problem to the will of God. Buddhism and Jainism do not even bother about introducing the idea of a creator and hold that all this diversity is due to our *karmas* (*Karmajaṁ loka vaicitryam*). Contrary to the views of Western scholars and missionaries, the law of Karma and the doctrine of rebirth make man responsible and morality meaningful. It is true that morality is not given an ultimate value here, but that is because our ultimate goal is to attain something eternal and that cannot be attained by Karma.

The law of Karma and rebirth is therefore to be regarded as part of the Divine device (Grace) to enable the Jiva to secure his salvation. The device works itself out in different ways. Either by constantly doing the spiritual practices the Buddhi is purified, and truth is reflected in it, i. e., knowledge is born and all karmas are burnt,⁸ or by experiencing repeated failures and frustrations, man, by the Grace of God, comes to realise that he is not the real doer but some other power to Whom he submits and surrenders and attains his goal. Basically these are the two methods but there may be variations of these in different ways. In view of all this, we assert that if life and actions in our life have any significance, any spiritual significance, the law of karma and rebirth must be accepted as a part of a spiritual scheme. Life is not a mad man's dance. Even an illusionist like the Advaitin would not hesitate in accepting the above position; because the Advaitin no less than anybody else, accepts the working of the Divine Grace in the universe and believes that the world is a cosmos and not a chaos.

* The question regarding the cause of difference and diversity at the beginning does not arise because there is no beginning, the jivas being beginningless.

8. Gītā, IV, 37.

FREEDOM†

Freedom is quite often confused either with some form of freedom or with some expression of it. Not only this, sometimes just a form of freedom is taken to be exclusively the only form, and not unoften the value of an expression of freedom is regarded as the value of freedom itself. It is therefore necessary to distinguish freedom from its forms and expressions and also the forms of freedom from its various expressions.

I

We hear these days quite a lot about different kinds of freedom—freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of worship and so on. These are different forms not of freedom but of the freedom of conduct indicating the absence or negation of different kinds of handicaps or limitations. These represent different directions of free will as it were. Moral freedom, political freedom and social freedom also are merely different forms of free will and not of freedom itself. That these are merely forms of free will should be obvious from the fact that they are intelligible only in relation to certain conditions. The conditions determine the forms. But if freedom means absence of determination, then there can be freedom other than that of human will. There is one kind of determination in the case of human will and another kind of it in the case of a lump of gold. The human will is determined by the choice of the good. Even when evil is chosen, it is taken to be good. Milton's Satan says, "Evil be thou my good". A lump of

† Read in a Panel Discussion at the International Seminar, C. A. S. P. Madras University, Dec., 1973.

gold, however, is determined by assuming a specific form. So freedom must not be confused merely with free will or moral will which is just a form of freedom. Moral freedom is just a form of freedom because it is relative to certain conditions; it can be there only if there is the awareness of good and evil. Choice is meaningless without the consciousness of distinctions. Like moral freedom, creative freedom also is only a form of freedom and not freedom itself, because it is not absolute but relative to certain conditions. These freedoms may be absolute in their own special sphere, but they are not *absolutely absolute*; they are only *relatively* absolute as Spinoza would put it.

The very variety of forms demands that freedom must be disengaged from them and that it must not be identified with anyone of them exclusively. Freedom as such can be had only by negating or transcending the various forms which but specify freedom and do not substitute it. Freedom by its very nature must be absolute; it must be infinite; it must be capable of assuming different forms without being tied down to any one of them. In fact freedom may be regarded as what can assume infinite forms. The different forms are only different directions in which freedom channelises itself under various conditions. It is obvious that when we go from forms of freedom to freedom as such, the term acquires a completely new meaning even as it happens when we turn from beings to Being. But we continue to use the term freedom even for absolute freedom, because there is no better choice.

Even as freedom is different from its various forms, the forms themselves are different from their various expressions. Moral freedom is a form of freedom which expresses itself in various moral acts. Religious freedom is a form of freedom expressing itself in different kinds of worship. Creative freedom similarly expresses itself in different kinds of arts. Thus an expression of a form of freedom is a further specification of that freedom. Expression is a kind of solidification or concretisation of a form of freedom. A poem, a novel, a picture or a moral act is nothing but the concretisation of a certain form of freedom. Thus there seem to be three levels or grades: freedom, forms of freedom and expressions of freedom.*

* Brahman, Īśvara, and the trinity of Brahma, Viṣṇu and Śiva may correspond to this hierarchy. Brahman the formless takes form as Īśvara and so Brahman is nothing but the self of Īśvara who is conscious of himself as Brahman. So Brahman and Īśvara though distinguishable are not different.

II

In the middle ages of European thought, theologians used to have hot discussions whether will or intellect, love or knowledge was the senior partner or the predominant element in the personality of God. To our way of thinking, it would appear that it was a very unreal issue. If the question was really concerning the freedom of God, freedom of will cannot really represent it; because freedom of will is only a form of freedom and not freedom itself that God is. God cannot be said to be free in the same sense in which man is. That is why some thinkers have pointed out that freedom does not mean the freedom to choose good or evil; freedom means the freedom to choose only the good. In other words, freedom does not mean freedom for but freedom from evil and imperfection, and God is free only in this sense. Man has or may have the freedom to choose but he is not free. This is a point which was well appreciated by Spinoza who pointed out that God has freedom but not the freedom of will. He very rightly held that while freedom was perfection, the freedom of will was a kind of imperfection. Man may boast of his freedom of will; the all-perfect can never do so as He lacks nothing and has therefore no need or occasion to choose.[†]

We may incidentally refer to another contemporary thinker. Sartre distinguished between the in-itself and the for-itself as two basic types of being. The in-itself is a kind of total plenitude in which there is "not the slightest emptiness" or " tiniest crack through which nothingness might slip in" while the for-itself is a decompression of being and is its own nothingness. Thus the two are wholly exclusive and the one cannot attain the other. But at the same time, Sartre would hold that the one cannot be without the other. The fundamental feature of the for-itself is freedom or the capacity to choose; this is so basic that it can never be lost; even not to choose is choosing. We would agree with Sartre that freedom is basic and so it can never be completely lost, but we cannot agree that freedom means merely the freedom to choose. There can be such a thing as the freedom of being which is logically prior to the freedom of choice. Sartre's famous statement that we are condemned to be free is not merely a style of expression; it betrays the feeling that in the present state of our

[†] Gita III, 22.

consciousness, we are forced to choose as it were and that freedom from this compulsion to choose is conceivable. That freedom would be the freedom of being and not of will. The fact that the for itself and the in-itself are exclusive of each means that they are also independent and that implies that the in-itself also has freedom though not the freedom of choice. This is possible because like the for itself, the in-itself is also a form of being. As being, both the for itself and the in-itself are free. That which is common to both namely being, is independent of both and has what may be called transcendent freedom or freedom of being. On surface the in-itself and the for itself exclude each other but to the extent they are both being, they share the freedom of being. If the in-itself did not have freedom, it could not exclude the for itself. The fallacy committed by Sartre is analogous to the fallacy found in the Sāṃkhya. In the Sāṃkhya also, two kinds of reality Prakṛti and Puruṣa are distinguished but no attempt is made to reach the transcendent or the common denominator. In Hegel too we have only a totality or synthesis of the self and the not-self but no transcendence. The transcendent should be equally common to both i. e. it should also be equally immanent. Freedom must be at once transcendent and immanent both,

III

It is this transcendent freedom or the freedom of being and not any particular form of freedom that has been emphasised in Indian philosophy. The question of free will is hotly discussed by western thinkers but curiously this question did not bother the Indian thinkers and has not been discussed by any one of them. This can only be due to the fact that their interest lay deeper. The empirical question whether we are free or not should not arise. So long as we feel free, no amount of argument or reasoning can persuade us to believe that we are not free. Even for the doctrine of Karma which is dear to all the Indian systems, the empirical feeling of freedom is enough. There is no need of giving a metaphysical status to free will as is done by the christian theologians. On the empirical level, we are condemned to have free will. As Sartre would put it, we are free even to accept or reject the arguments against freedom. If, however, the question is not about the empirical feeling of freedom, the question becomes metaphysical and cannot be decided on the basis of any amount of empirical evidence or experience.

The reason why the Indian thinkers concerned themselves more about the freedom of being rather than that of will is that they were convinced that the former was the ground of the freedom of will and of all other forms of freedom as also of all values. Freedom is the basic value and all other values are derivative. Joy the supreme value and freedom are identical. All values emanate from joy or infinity or rather absolute infinity. This absolute infinity can be nothing but the pure self or pure consciousness; the two are convertible terms because only pure consciousness can be absolutely infinite. And since the infinite alone can be free and not the finite, the self or freedom is the source of all values. As the Upaniṣad puts it, everything is dear to us because of the self (*ātmanastu kāmāya sarvam priyam bhavati*). The same idea is reaffirmed in the conception of *bhūmā* or the infinite (Chh. Up. Ch. VII, 23). It has been clearly stated that there can be no joy in the finite; there can be joy only in the infinite or *bhūmā* (*Yo vai bhūmā tatsukham nālpe sukhamasti*). The definition of the infinite has also been given; the infinite is that where there is no duality. Where ever there is duality and hence determinateness, there is finitude, there is death, there is fear, there is suffering. But when one attains unity, there is immortality (*amṛtam*) there is freedom from fear (*abhayam*), there is freedom from suffering (*śokam*); in short there is complete or absolute freedom (*svarāḍ bhavati samrāḍiti*). There one attains everything (*āptakāma*), one desires nothing (*akāma*) or rather one desires only the self (*ātma kāma*).

This is not the place to go into any detail regarding the nature of the self as pure consciousness. Suffice it to say that consciousness, if we understand by it pure consciousness and not any particular form of it, can neither be a quality nor an activity nor a relation; it cannot belong to anything; it must be basic. Nor can consciousness be limited; there is nothing which can limit it because there can be nothing which is independent of consciousness. It is possible, however, to doubt the reality of any such thing as pure consciousness on the ground that we have no experience of it. But if different forms of consciousness are accepted, it becomes logically necessary to accept the notion of pure consciousness as basic to all the different forms. On the one hand, one cannot expect the ground of experience to appear as a part of experience. On the other hand, one cannot accept a variety of forms without at the same time admitting an underlying unity. So one has got to accept such a thing as pure consciousness underlying the forms and not appearing as a form.

IV

Freedom which is the ground of all forms of freedom and all expressions of freedom is necessarily transcendent and cannot therefore be realized by or through any of its particular forms. Freedom of will for example cannot take us beyond morality or the sphere of good and evil. Creative freedom or art cannot take us beyond the sphere of the beautiful and the ugly. Though the forms cannot take us beyond themselves, their plurality serves an important purpose—the purpose of indicating something beyond themselves, something which is common to all of them. When we fail to see this, we become idolatrous even as we become idolatrous when we fail to pass on from the symbols to the symbolised. This passing from the forms to the formless is possible only because of the plurality of forms. If there were only one form or symbol, it would be impossible to disengage it from that of which it is the form or the symbol. The form or the symbol would become the thing. But since there are many forms, it is possible to disengage the forms from the thing itself. Freedom negates itself by taking form or rather freedom is what can take infinite forms. And so absolute freedom can be realized only by negating the forms, a process which is felt as soon as we pass from one form of freedom to another. There can be thus only a negative way of realizing freedom and not a positive way, because by positive methods we can realize only a form of freedom and not freedom itself; for freedom, the forms have to be negated and this is possible because freedom is already immanent in the forms. That freedom can be realized only negatively is not to say that freedom is negative; it is utterly positive or rather beyond the positive and the negative being the ground of the possibility of both. A form of freedom is at once both positive and negative as it at once excludes and includes both. But freedom is not like that. Further, while freedom is utterly positive and forms are both positive and negative there is nothing which is utterly negative or completely determined. This is because there is nothing in which there is no being or freedom. Freedom can never lose itself completely. There is nothing which is an utter void or emptiness. There is none who is God-forsaken or unregenerate, none eternally damned. There is hope for everyone.

Freedom though capable of assuming infinite forms, is one with infinite being or actuality and must not be confused with potentiality

or indeterminateness. And though itself all actuality, freedom is the basis of all potentiality and progress. This is because freedom can negate itself and the negation of freedom or rather the hiddenness of actuality is potentiality. Ignorance of the actuality of freedom or joy is the basis of all effort and potentiality. Freedom cannot be brought into existence; an effect is a further loss of freedom and so no amount of karma would avail in the realization of freedom which is all actuality. The actual can be only discovered or known. This is why it has been said that there can be no freedom without knowledge (*ṛtejñānānna muktiḥ*). Truly there is nothing like knowledge (*na hi jñānena sadṛśam pavitrāmiha vidyate*). Knowledge alone can give us salvation as knowledge can alone discover the infinity of the self.

Freedom may be understood also as grace. In human affairs, grace is associated with the freedom of will. It is said to be specially evident where freedom of will exhibits itself as freedom from rigid rules and regulations. The implication is that grace is free from every external determination. In this sense, man is really not capable of showing any grace. Only he who is not only free for but also free from —and that too absolutely, can really show grace. The grace of God is therefore the exemplar of all grace, the kind of grace that is known in human society is just an imitation or reflection of Divine Grace which is there for all and for ever. True grace if it is to be distinguished from mere whim on the one hand and licence on the other must be one with true being or absolute freedom.

NEGATION IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY†

It seems to us that the problem of negation has not been as well appreciated in Western philosophy as in Indian philosophy. Very few Western philosophers have paid attention to this problem and have cared to go into its intricacies. But when we turn to Indian philosophy, we find that every system has discussed this problem and has tried to take a view consistent with its basic standpoint. This is as it should be, because the problem of negation has an importance which cannot be ignored by any system. There is no system which does not negate some view or belief or hypothesis. It is therefore necessary that it should be made clear as to what negation means, on what it is based, what happens to that which is negated, whether everything can be negated and so on. An answer to these questions becomes all the more unavoidable when we find that a controversy is possible regarding each one of them. The problem would not have been so pressing were there unanimity regarding these questions, but as is well known, it is not so. Hence no philosophy worth the name can afford to evade or shirk the problem of negation.

There are many questions concerning negation that arise: the question of definition, of kinds, of the status of the negated, of the way negation is known and finally the question of the possibility of universal negation. As it is not possible to go into the details of every system, I have selected three typical approaches to this problem. I have discussed the Nyāya Vaiśeṣika or the realist view, the Vedāntic view and the Buddhist view. I have tried to answer three major questions

† Read at the Colloquium of the Department of Philosophy, Brock University, St. Catharines (Ont.), Canada 1970 March.

from the point of view of these three schools, the question regarding the knowledge of negation, the status of the negated and the question of universal negation.

II

Before we take up the above three questions from the standpoint of the Nyāya, we may dispose of the question of definition and kinds. Can negation be defined and if so, how are we to define it? The Nyāya is famous for its definitions and claims the ability to define everything. The definition of *abhāva* given is *bhāva bhinnatva*, that is, difference or otherness from *bhāva* or existence. Obviously, the definition is not successful, because it is circular. *Bhinnatva* or otherness includes in it the idea of negation. It appears to us that negation is primary and simple and is therefore irreducible to any thing else which is simpler or more primary. Negation can neither be derived nor defined; every attempt to do so can be shown to presuppose it.

For Nyāya, all negation is a type of *abhāva*¹ which is classified into four kinds. The first is the *prāgabhāva* or the absence of a thing before it is produced. This is obviously beginningless but comes to an end when the thing is produced. The second is *pradhvaṃsābhāva* or the non-existence of a thing after its destruction. This has a beginning but no end. Both of these refer to a particular space and time. The third *anyonyābhāva* means literally exclusion. This refers to the denial of identity when we say, for instance, that x is not y. Finally, there is the fourth kind of *abhāva* called *atyantābhāva*, literally absolute non-existence. This refers to the denial of relation, for example, when we say that there is no colour in the air or in the sound. This type of *abhāva* is absolute in the sense that the two cannot be related in any way and at any time. This doctrine of the four kinds of negation or *abhāva* is said to be metaphysically necessary. If *prāgabhāva* is not accepted, then there can be no beginning, if *pradhvaṃsābhāva* is denied, then there can be no end of things, if *anyonyābhāva* is not recognised then things cannot be distinguished and if *atyantābhāva* is not

1. The term *abhāva* literally means absence or non-existence but as all non-existence is expressed as a negative judgment, *abhāva* is translated as negation. But there is a distinction between non-existence and negation; while *abhāva* refers to a thing or entity negation refers to a view. The Nyāya takes the two to be the same.

admitted then anything can exist anywhere and everywhere. This terminology is useful and employed by all the systems. We may notice here that non-existence for the Nyāya is only relational or relative and not absolute or metaphysical. There is no such thing as utter non-existence.

III

Let us now turn to the three questions which we raised at the beginning and try to ascertain the Nyāya answer to them. To begin with, how is the absence of something or non-existence known? The Nyāya view is that just as the presence of a thing is perceived, its absence also is perceived.² Absence is as much real as presence is. The difficulty regarding the possibility of having sense-contact with an absent thing is anticipated. It is conceded that the senses cannot have contact with an absent thing and yet non-existence is perceived and that by a special kind of sense-contact with the locus of non-existence which is qualified by the absence of the thing. The problem is thus claimed to be solved by stipulating a peculiar kind of sense-contact (*sannikarṣa*) called *viśeṣaṇatā*. Apart from the fact that this stipulation is wholly *a priori* and dogmatic, there are other difficulties too. To know the locus as qualified by absence presupposes knowledge of absence. Again what about the knowledge of absence in the past? I can say today that there was no tiger in my office yesterday, but it is not possible to perceive the tiger's absence just now. You cannot say that it is memory, because there is no evidence of there being a positive knowledge prior to it. One can recall only an absence of the knowledge of the tiger and not a positive knowledge of absence.

We can well anticipate the Nyāya answer to the question regarding the status of the negated if we remember that the Nyāya is a realist system. It is said that negation has always reference to time and place or a locus. Whenever we say that a thing is non-existent it is relative to a time and place. If a thing is not there just now or if it is not here, it does not mean that it is nowhere. Negation is only relative. This is so even in the case of the so called illusory objects. When we say that this is not a snake, what we mean is that the *this* is not a snake or that the snake is not here and not that the snake is

2. Older Naiyayikas regard *abhāva* as inference.

nowhere. This view of illusion is called *anyathākhyāti*. On this view, the terms are not unreal, only the relation between them is unreal. The same logic is applied to the case of objects called *asat* such as sky-flower or square-circle. It is held that the sky and the flower are real, only the combination of the two is unreal. Consistent with the realist principle that no content of knowledge is false or subjective, the Nyāya thus makes a tenacious effort to uphold the reality of what is ordinarily taken to be false. The weakness of this theory will be pointed out later.

It is obvious from what has been said above that the Nyāya cannot accept any such thing as universal negation. All negation is somewhere and sometime and of a particular object. If everything is to be negated, where will it be negated, when and by whom? The Nyāya is thus a vigorous opponent not only of utter non-existence such as that of the sky-flower, but also of universal negation such as is advocated by the Mādhyamika School of Buddhism.

IV

We may now turn to Buddhism. The importance of negation in Buddhism is particularly noticeable because Buddhism has always been a *Sūnyatā* doctrine, whether Hīnayāna or Mahāyāna. The difference among the Buddhist schools is only regarding the direction and the scope of negation or *sūnyatā*. The early realistic schools were interested only in negating substance, soul, unity and universal but accepted the reality of the *dharmas*, the momentary, the particular and the parts. Their doctrine is therefore called *pudgal-nairātmya vāda*; it is the *sūnyatā* of everything except the momentary. The Idealist School or the Vijñāna-Vādins turned the direction of negation toward external objects and thereby extended the scope of negation. Their doctrine is *grāha-dvaya sūnyatā* or the negation of the duality of knowledge and its object; there are only ideas which are self-known and do not require even a separate knower. The Mādhyamika carried negation to its furthest limit and universalised its scope by denying even the reality of *vijñāna* or the ideas; there are neither ideas nor things. Absolute *sūnyatā* or *dr̥ṣṭi-sūnyatā* or denial of all views is the interpretation of *sūnyatā* given by the Mādhyamika. Thus emphasis on negation is there in Buddhism from the very beginning and in all schools.

The Buddhist logicians are opposed to the Nyāya thesis that non-existence can be perceived. The Nyāya view that *abhāva* is like

bhāva a reality or an aspect of reality is rejected. Reality is only *bhāva* or existence, as existence alone can be *arthakriyākārī* or efficient or productive; existence alone is given in experience. As regards non-existence, it is no doubt known and that knowledge is also useful, but it is not directly known. It is a thing of indirect knowledge and so comes under some kind of inference* which is based on non-perception. If *x* were there, it would have been perceived. But it is not perceived and so it is not there. It is a case of hypothetical-categorical syllogism, denying the antecedent by denying the consequent. The absent thing is therefore only ideal or imaginary but not in the sense in which sky-flower is imaginary because while the former can be perceived, the latter cannot be perceived. The Buddhist would agree with the Nyāya that the question of *abhāva* arises only with regard to what can be perceived. It follows therefore, that the Buddhist cannot say that metaphysical entities like God, soul and substance are non-existent; he can only say that they are imaginary or due to *avidyā* or false. There is a difference between the false and the non-existent.

It appears that while the Nyāya emphasises the knowledge of absence, the Buddhist relies on the absence of knowledge. The Nyāya claim that we have a positive and direct knowledge of the absent does not seem to be well founded. By merely looking at the table, we cannot enumerate or point out all the things that are absent there. We have got to have the idea of (remember or imagine) the things whose absence we claim to see. Knowledge of the present is not of the same order as that of the absent. Knowledge of the absent cannot be regarded as direct perception and the Buddhist seems to be right in rejecting the Nyāya claim. But is the Buddhist right in claiming that negation is a matter of inference? To infer non-existence from non-perception—is it not circular? Firstly, how is the relation between non-perception and non-existence itself known? Secondly, how is non-perception or absence of cognition itself known? Would it not lead to an infinite regress if non-perception is again sought to be known from some other inference? It seems to us therefore that the Buddhist while right in denying that negation is a case of simple perception, is wrong in thinking that negation can be reduced to inference; he is not able to appreciate the irreducible nature of negation.

Unlike the Nyāya, the Buddhist believes in the doctrine of the *a priori* or the doctrine of transcendental creativity or subjectivity; the

3. The Stcherbatsky *Buddhist Logic* Vol. I, p. 370.

Nyāya, as a hard Realist, does not admit anything as subjective; even knowledge is objectified to the extent it is an object of another knowledge. All negation is of the same order, but in Buddhism we find two kinds of negation—negation as non-perception and negation as falsity. Non-perception can refer only to what can be perceived but falsity refers to the subjective or what is due to *avidyā* or *kalpanā*. Relations and metaphysical entities such as substance, soul etc. come under the latter and are treated as *a priori* beliefs; only the particular and the momentary is given in experience and is real. Things like sky-flower are neither to be taken as *abhāva* nor as *a priori* construction; they are mere words (*śabdāmātram*).

On the question of universal negation, the Buddhist schools are divided into two camps: the realists and idealists both reject the possibility of universal negation while the Mādhyamika accepts it. The Mādhyamika argument is that in order to reject a view it is not necessary to accept some other view. A view is rejected not on the basis of another view but purely on the basis of inconsistency or self-contradiction. And since it is possible to prove that all views are self-contradictory, it is possible to reject all views without accepting any view. In other words, rejection of all views is not itself a view otherwise it will not be the rejection of *all* views. The realist and the idealist Buddhists point out that this would lead to nihilism, but the Mādhyamika avers that he is not a nihilist because he is not denying truth but only denying *dṛṣṭis* or views of truth or that he is distinguishing truth from views; truth is beyond all views and is as such unspeakable. The Mādhyamika position is not of having no reality but only of having no view of reality as Prof. Murti puts it.⁴ Śūnya is not void but devoid of views. Reality transcends thought so much that all views are left behind empty. So the Mādhyamika is not a nihilist. His rejection of all views including nihilism is only a way of emphasising the utter transcendence of *tattva*.

We agree that the Mādhyamika is not a nihilist but an absolutist. But if this is so, negation in the Mādhyamika is not universal as it leaves behind a residue, the *tattva*. Our criticism of the Mādhyamika approach is that if there is nothing in experience which has any contact with the *tattva*, that is, if we have no foothold at all in experience, then on what basis can the Mādhyamika take the view that after the abolition

4. *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* p. 234.

of all views, there remains *tattva* or *prajñā* (intuition)? Wherefrom does he get a guarantee for that? For him, views are not falsified by a knowledge of *tattva* but the other way round; the falsification of views leads to the knowledge of *tattva*, but what is the surety? This question is pertinent because it is claimed that the Mādhyamika does not depend on any extra-logical source.⁵ If so, can the dialectic by itself assure us of the transcendent? It seems to us that the Mādhyamika suffers from two excesses: excessive emphasis on logic and excessive emphasis on transcendence. Logic can analyse views and can show their inconsistency but logic cannot give us truth or falsity; logic is too formal for that. Truth and falsity are given in experience. Similarly while it is right to emphasise the transcendence of the absolute, it is suicidal to emphasise it so much that the absolute becomes completely unknown or *aprasiddha* or *alika* like the sky flower. The immanence of the absolute also must be insisted upon, but that can be done only if some element or aspect of experience is accepted as a kind of rock which cannot be denied. The Mādhyamika is not able to do that, because he does not accept anything, with the result that he cannot even show that the absolute is realisable. These two shortcomings of the Mādhyamika are removed in the Vedānta and so let us now turn to that.

In a way the Vedānta takes a middle position between Nyāya and Buddhism regarding the knowledge of *abhāva*. It is a position midway between the rejection of nothing (Nyāya) and the rejection of everything (Mādhyamika), between universal objectivity (Nyāya) and universal subjectivity (*viññānavāda*) or the denial of subjectivity and the denial of objectivity. With the Nyāya, the Vedānta opposes the Buddhist view that *abhāva* can be inferred; the very premises presuppose the knowledge of *abhāva*. With the Buddhist, he opposes the Nyāya contention that *abhāva* can be perceived like *bhāva*. It is wrong to treat *abhāva* as at par with *bhāva* and to say that *abhāva* is as much perceived as *bhāva*. All negation presupposes affirmation but not vice versa. This means that negation is always the negation of a prior affirmation actual or hypothetical. The realist seems to think that what is negated is only a term or a thing, but really speaking the object of negation is a belief or a suggestion or a judgment and not a thing. This is why the sky flower is not negated; there is no assertion or belief about that. Otherwise the sky-flower is

5. Ibid p. 159.

as much not here as a tiger. The sky-flower would be negated if only it could be asserted. Negation always refers to assertion. To say that x is not y is to deny that x is y. As Kant puts it "The proper object of a negative judgment is to prevent error."⁶ It is in the context of the cancellation of an error or illusion that negation becomes relevant and meaningful, otherwise it would appear as absurd as saying that light is not darkness because light is never mistaken for darkness. For that very reason, there is no point in denying the sky-flower as it is never affirmed. So negation is a more complex process and implies a higher or more critical consciousness than affirmation. It takes into consideration a prior judgment or belief or suggestion; it requires *pratiyogi smarana* or the recollection of the thing negated.

Once it is realised that negation is a higher type of consciousness than affirmation and takes into consideration some affirmation possible or actual, it will be seen that in all negation, there is reference to a subjective element, namely belief. All negation is negation of a belief or is awareness of the presence of the subjective. From this point of view, all the different kinds of *abhāva* or non-existence are reduced to one type of negation in which we see the falsity of a belief or judgment. The Nyāya being a realist does not want to recognise any thing as subjective. The Buddhist realist accepts the presence of the subjective in experience but confines it only to the metaphysical entities. The idealist extends subjectivity even to external entities and the Mādhyamika reduces everything to subjective or *avidyā*. So the real issue regarding negation is whether it refers to anything subjective and how far the scope of the subjective goes.

Although more complex than positive perception, negation cannot be an inference. The knowledge of the absence of knowledge has to be direct and independent. Absence of a possible knowledge is by itself an independent knowledge. After all, absence of knowledge is known, though negation is not mere absence of knowledge because that may be due to all kinds of obstacles such as distance, darkness, etc., it is rather absence of possible knowledge (*Yogyānupalabdhi*). If God is not seen, it does not follow that there is no God because God is never claimed to be the object of perception. If we do not see the centre of the earth, it does not follow that there is no centre of the earth. So negation is the absence of possible knowledge. An

6 Quoted in *Buddhist Logic* Vol. I, p. 391

interesting argument advanced by the *Mīmāṃsā* is that unless *anupalabdhi* or absence of possible knowledge is accepted as a *pramāṇa* or source of knowledge, how can we say that now there is no other source of knowledge? How to reach the last *pramāṇa*? So knowledge of the absence of knowledge is in its own right a kind of knowledge. It is primitive and irreducible.

We have quoted Kant to support our view that negation arises in the context of the correction of error. This brings us to the second question, that is, the question regarding the status of the negated. Even if it be accepted that negation arises in the form of correction, it is possible to interpret correction itself in various ways according as it suits a particular standpoint. Let us take the famous example of ropesnake. The negative judgment "this is not a snake" is interpreted by the Nyāya realist to mean that *this* is not a snake or that the snake is elsewhere and is not this. The intention is to safeguard the reality of the snake. The *this* and the snake are both real, only the relation between them is false just as the sky and flower are both real, but the relation between them is false. Thus the Nyāya negates the snake merely in the sense of excluding it from a certain context and not in the sense of rejecting its reality. But is it not quite wrong to say that the particular snake seen in the context of the illusion can be traced anywhere? It is not a universal (*jāti*) but a particular snake that is seen here and that can neither be traced in the past nor in the future. So the Vedānta emphasises that the snake should be regarded as false, as what cannot be had anywhere. For the realist, consciousness is passive and receptive and not creative and so no content of consciousness can be false. The realist does not see the point that unless consciousness is active and creative the very confusion between two contents of consciousness—the *this* and the snake—cannot take place. This is why Prabhākara does not accept illusion as an act of commission but of omission only; it is a case of non-perception or non-distinction and not of confusion. But unless there is confusion, there is no error, and contents do not confuse themselves; you and I confuse them. The Buddhist idealist goes to the other extreme; he regards consciousness to be so creative that there is no place for any independent object; everything becomes idea or *vijñāna*. The idealist takes the negative judgment "this is not a snake" to mean that the snake is not a *this* or an external object but just an idea. The error is just in seeing it as an object and not as an idea. But if this were so, the form of the correc-

ting consciousness should be "the snake is not this" which is not the case; we say "this is not a snake." The idealist view makes the knowledge of the rope irrelevant to the cancelling consciousness. In fact, in his view there is nothing to be known; emergence of an idea and its knowledge are simultaneous. The idealist position therefore does not seem to be tenable. When we come to the Mādhyamika position, we see that he takes the extreme view that the rope too like the snake is false. But if the rope and the snake were equally false, how could the knowledge of the rope cancel the knowledge of the snake. The snake and the rope cannot belong to the same order. The Vedāntin would ask; by what criterion do you regard the rope as false? You cannot say that the rope is self-contradictory. In fact the principle of self-contradictoriness does not apply even to the snake. The snake is false not because it is self-contradictory, but because it is negated by a higher type of consciousness. Truth and falsity therefore refer to two orders of consciousness and not merely to dialectic or the principle of self-contradictoriness. Unless some consciousness is superior to the other, the former cannot sit in judgment over the other. The Vedāntin therefore comes to the following conclusion regarding the negative judgment, this is not a snake. Firstly, the snake seen here is not merely excluded but rejected from all contexts; it can find place nowhere else. Secondly, it is not merely the externality of the snake that is rejected, because the rope which is objective comes to be the object of true judgment. Nor can you reject the snake and the rope both, because there is no basis on which you can do that. The negative judgment therefore means that this is a snake is false because this is a rope. The negated is something which claims to be real but which is not real. So the negated is at once different from the real which is not negated and also from the *asat* (sky-flower) which does not claim to be real; it is a new category discovered by reflection and not given in natural experience. Negation means only the discovery of the locus which is concealed by the negated; absence is not a qualification over and above the locus as the Nyāya claims. Absence of *abhāva* is *adhikaraṇasvarūpa* or of the nature of the locus and nothing more; negation of the snake means just the awareness of the rope.

It would appear that the Vedānta too like the Mādhyamika believes in universal negation in as much as it denies the reality of everything, the whole world of plurality and difference. It is true that the Vedānta rejects the world of plurality and change as mere

appearance, but that is because it accepts their underlying ground as real; nothing can be regarded as false without something being true. When everything has been rejected, the rejecting consciousness is left over as something which cannot be rejected. So universal negation is impossible, a point which the Mādhyamika must see. Instead of saying that the Vedānta like the Mādhyamika accepts universal negation, we should say that the Mādhyamika should like Vedānta see the point that universal negation is not possible.

A possible objection may be anticipated. It may be argued that the subject and object are relative to each other and so if the object goes, the subject cannot remain; the two have to go together. This is true, but what the Vedānta accepts as the undeniable self is not the empirical subject of Descartes, but rather the absolute which is beyond subject-object duality. It is beyond not in the sense in which the absolute of Hegel is beyond, because it is not a synthesis like Hegel's absolute; rather it is the transcendent ground of both. Being featureless and formless it would appear as pure nothing because we are in the unconscious habit of regarding only the determinate (Nāma rūpa) as real. This unconscious attitude has to go after the experience of the rope-snake. Brahman or the Śūnya of the Mādhyamika is not nothing like sky-flower but no thing; it is like space. It is our innermost self which can be realised here and now by removing the obsessions which prevent us from doing so.

NĀGARJUNA OR ŚANKARA ?†

Nāgārjuna and Śankara have both been great dialecticians, great saints and great, if not the greatest, interpreters of the most important traditions of Indian thought—Buddhism and Vedānta. There seems to be a good deal of similarity also in regard to their conception of *tattva* (the absolute), so much so that if Śankara is sometimes called a crypto-Buddhist, Nāgārjuna too (if he is not mistaken to be a nihilist) stands no less in the fear of being called a Brahma-Vādin; the negative characterisation of Brahman and Śūnya is strikingly similar. Both the thinkers make a distinction between the *vyāvahārika* (the empirical) and the *pārmāthika* (the absolute); both regard knowledge (*tattva-jñāna*) as the only means of salvation and insist that a certain type of life is necessary for the attainment of that knowledge (*aparokṣānubhūti*, *prajñā*).

Notwithstanding the above points of similarity, there seem to be important differences too. While both take the absolute to be beyond *all* thought and speech, Śankara makes *śruti* indispensable and identifies the absolute with our deeper self but Nāgārjuna would demur to do so as that would amount to having a *dṛṣṭi* (thought or point of view) and would not be truth. Śankara goes even further and talks about creation, *Īśvara* etc. which Nāgārjuna would abhor, although both of them talk of *avidyā*. So the question arises whether there is a way of deciding between Nāgārjuna and Śankara or we shall just acquiesce in the view that the two teachers teach more or less the same doctrines and so there is no serious problem as to whether Nāgārjuna or Śankara is to be preferred.

† The present paper is practically a review of the Mādhyamika position as presented by Prof. Murti in *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* which has become a classic now.

It seems to us that it is not quite correct to identify the two views broadly and dissolve the problem of preference and distinction. The two teachers belong to two different, if not also opposed, traditions of thought—*ātmavāda* and *anātmavāda*. The exponents of the two systems criticized each other, and it would be rather bold to suggest that they did so because they did not understand each other. Finally, there seems to be an undeniable distinction in the very approach of the two *Ācāryas*. Śāṅkara propounds his view by way of commenting on *Śruti* and has some positive teachings too. Nāgārjuna does not do so as he does not claim to teach anything positive; his is only the method of negation or refutation. The question of choice between these two therefore cannot be shelved by a student of the two systems.

We venture to suggest that a consideration of the following two questions regarding which Nāgārjuna and Śāṅkara differ, may bring us nearer a decision in the matter. One question is whether only two grades of reality, namely the *vyāvahārika* (the empirical) and the *Pāramārthika* (the absolute) should be accepted or there is the need of accepting also a third one called the *prātibhāsika* (the empirically false, rope-snake). This question is pertinent because Nāgārjuna accepts only two while Śāṅkara would like to have three grades. The other question is whether the *tattva* (the absolute) is utterly transcendent, not having even a tangential relation with anything in our experience or it is possible to identify it with something in experience. Here too the two thinkers differ. Nāgārjuna would not, for fear of being involved in a *dr̥ṣṭi*, identify the *tattva* with anything in experience while Śāṅkara regards Brahman as our inner self. Let us examine the merit of the two positions in the light of these questions.

II

The problem of philosophy for Nāgārjuna arises from the conflict of systems; the conflict of views is enough to condemn them as false; mutual conflict shows that none is true. Further, even if each view is examined regardless of the conflict, it is found to be self-contradictory and absurd. Nāgārjuna analyses like Bradley the basic categories of thought and shows that all of them whether taken individually or collectively, fail to give us the *tattva*, and that for the simple reason that they are all contradictory and relative having no *svabhāva* or nature of their own. From this, the Mādhyamika draws two conclusions. One, that all thought being fraught with relativity and contradiction

is false, and two, that the *tattva* (absolute) must be *catuṣkoti vinirmukta* or beyond all possible views or thought. In this way, there are only two levels for him, the one of thought or falsity and the other of the transcendent or truth. All positive philosophies—*asti* (ātmavāda), *nāsti* (anātmavāda), both *asti* and *nāsti* (synthesis like Jainism or Hegel) and neither *asti* nor *nāsti* (scepticism)—all these are mere views and do not give us truth. Knowledge can be had only by a dialectical demolition of these edifices of thought or what may be called the world of opinion in the words of Plato.

Regarding the above approach of the Mādhyamika, certain very important questions arise. Supposing that thought fails to comprehend reality and as such deserves to be demolished, how does it follow that the rejection of thought will amount to our having *prajñā* or intuition? Intuition for Nāgārjuna is not a positive process but what arises in the wake of negation; nothing more is to be done after complete negation. But this is possible only if thought is regarded as a veil of intuition, otherwise the rejection of thought may give rise to mere blank or agnosticism. Does the Mādhyamika regard thought as a veil or not? Professor Murti uses expressions which suggest that the Mādhyamika does so. "Non-dual knowledge (*jñānam advayam*) is the abolition of all particular viewpoints which restrict and distort reality".¹ If this is so, is the Mādhyamika not veering round to Advaitism? How does he know that thought is a veil or even that there is something to veil? It is obvious that mere reason or dialectic cannot reveal all this or else Bradley also would have come to the same view. Either this is a dogmatic assumption or a message of tradition, may be the Buddhist tradition. If the former, the vanity of the Mādhyamika that he is free from all assumptions receives a rude shock; if the latter, the Mādhyamika is no less a dogmatic traditionalist than Śāṅkara.² The Mādhyamika cannot take the view that he depends only on dialectic and not on tradition, and so he cannot justifiably criticise Śāṅkara for depending on *śruti*. Nāgārjuna and Śāṅkara both have got to depend on tradition, though not on the same tradition; no spiritual discipline is possible without that. Nāgārjuna depends no less than Śāṅkara on an extra-philosophical source.³

1. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*; P. 214, 231

2. Ibid p. 216

3. Ibid p. 158

The other question that arises is concerning the nature of falsity. It may be granted that thought is relative and contradictory, but how does it follow that it is false? For the Jaina relativity and for Hegel antinomy is the mark of reality.† Where from does the Mādhyamika learn the principle that the contradictory or the relative is false? There may be self-contradiction or inconsistency, but falsity is not mere inconsistency: falsity is not a mere logical error or incompatibility of concepts. There seems to be a veritable dilemma for the Mādhyamika here. If he gives us an instance of the situation where the contradictory is found to be false, he is accepting the *prātibhāsika* (a case of empirical illusion), and if he is not able to give us an instance from experience, then there seems to be no justification for the principle that the contradictory is false. He cannot take the position that mere logic can give the principle of falsity. Logic is formal and can give us a principle of consistency or inconsistency; it cannot give us a principle of truth and falsity. If mere logic is allowed to determine truth and falsity, then truth cannot be beyond thought. If it is said that the law of contradiction determines the nature of falsity but not of truth, we would say that you cannot regard the self-contradictory as false without implicitly accepting the self-consistent as true. Inconsistency or self-contradiction cannot be equated with falsity; the former is purely formal and is found only in the realm of concepts; while the latter (falsity) refers to some intuition. The rope-snake is false not because it is self-contradictory but because it is superseded or cancelled (*bādhita*) by a higher consciousness. In the experience of truth and falsity there is always some kind of immediacy which distinguishes it from mere logical error. If mere inconsistency were falsity, it would imply that consistency is truth, and that would imply that truth is conceptual because consistency is only within concepts. Surely the Mādhyamika cannot take the Hegelian view that we are necessarily confined to concepts or that there is nothing extra-conceptual, because he believes in *prajñā* or nonconceptual intuition. Hegel could depend on mere logic as he accepted only reason or concepts but the Mādhyamika cannot. Does the Mādhyamika regard Śūnya as truth because

* Sri Aurobindo argues that there is such a thing as the logic of the Infinite which is magic to the finite. Against the Mādhyamika it may be said that the very fact that the absolute is beyond thought may mean that it may well be self-contradictory, because self-contradiction is repulsive only to thought. To say that the tattva cannot be self-contradictory amounts to saying that the tattva is like thought or one with thought to which self contradiction is repulsive.

it is consistent (free from contradiction) or because it is a higher level of consciousness ? Śankara should be appreciated and not blamed⁴ for taking his clue from empirical illusion.

III

Professor Murti points out that the *tattva* (reality) is for the Mādhyamika not void but only devoid of all thought; it is not a no-reality view but merely 'no view of the real'. This is again Vedāntic language. He says further, "It is not true to say, as is done by Vedānta and Vijñānavāda, that the Mādhyamika conceives illusion to occur without any underlying ground (*niradhiṣṭhāna bhrama*)".⁵ But, one may ask, if the *tattva* is the ground or the *adhiṣṭhāna*, why "is it not shown by him (the Mādhyamika) to be immanent in experience"?⁶ If *tattva* is not the ground, it would be wholly unrealizable and as good as nothing for us having no relation to us or to our experience. In the other case, the *tattva* comes to be the ground or self of things which again would be Vedānta. The point of Śankara's criticism of Śūnyavāda is just this; it is either nihilism or veiled Vedānta. The Mādhyamika cannot afford to regard the *tattva* as wholly transcendent, and so he has to accept in howsoever veiled a manner, the Vedāntic view that the *tattva* must be immanent as the self of things concealed by appearance. If we consider the Mādhyamika view of *avidyā*, the same conclusion is forced on us. *Adidyā* is said to have two functions; *āvarṇa* (concealment) and *asatkhyāpana* (putting up appearances). But *avidyā* is impossible except in relation to consciousness. Moreover, if there is nothing else, what is it that *avidyā* hides and how does *avidyā* which is jaḍa (inert) become dynamic enough for *asatkhyāpana* (projecting appearances)? The Mādhyamika hesitates to accept these implications explicitly and criticises Advaitism for doing so.

The trouble is that the Mādhyamika wants both, to eat the cake and also to keep it. In the interest of consistency, he abstains from all views and observes silence. But as a believer in realizable truth, he is forced to acquiesce in the self-view of things. In justice

4. Ibid p. 216, 324, where Professor Murti suggests that only Vedānta and Vijñānavāda depend on an extralogical source and not Nāgārjuna.

5. Ibid p. 237

6. Ibid p. 237

to Professor Murti, it must be pointed out that the failure of the Mādhyamika to show that the *tattva* is also immanent and not only transcendent is accepted by him as a drawback of that philosophy.⁷

IV

If Nāgārjuna's philosophy is a philosophy of philosophies or a critical analysis of all possible *dr̥ṣṭis*, Śāṅkara's philosophy may be regarded as a critical analysis of our whole experience, that is, all the three states of experience-waking, sleep and dream. It is wrong to compare Śāṅkara with dogmatic speculative philosophers who start with an *a priori* definition or criterion of reality or truth which is claimed to be selfevident and universal. It is alleged that Śāṅkara interprets the empirical illusion in a particular way and then universalises it and applies that view to the whole world. It is forgotten that it is in the context of empirical illusion and its cancellation that the problem of philosophy arises. If philosophy does not start from experience, it will be a mere adventure of ideas. We could not even go in search of truth or even raise the question of truth, unless we already had some experience of truth and falsity. Nor could we get the criterion of truth and falsity from any source other than our experience of it. This is the point in starting with an analysis of the empirical illusion. Śāṅkara appeals to the universally admitted fact that the false is what is cancelled (*bādhita*) and truth is what is not cancelled (*trikālābādhita*). This is neither *a priori* not arbitrary. It is a not a view but the *universal* view. Śāṅkara asks us only to go forward with the principle and search for what is never cancelled. As pure reason cannot be categorical about that, *śruti* is brought in. Mere analysis cannot reveal to us the nature of the unconditioned or the eternal (*trikālābādhita*). The Upaniṣads categorically assure us that underlying the empirical self and illumining it, there is the universal and eternal self which shines by itself and is never cancelled. This suggestion of the *śruti* is made acceptable by an analysis of the three states and is confirmed by the experience of the fourth state (*turiyāvasthā*) or (*nirvaikalpa samādhi*). Advaitism thus begins with experience and also ends with experience; philosophy or reflection comes in as an episode between empirical experience and ultimate experience (*nirvikalpa samādhi*).

It is wrong to represent Śāṅkara as a partisan. Like Nāgārjuna he too examines all the categories of thought and declares them as

7. Ibid p. 237

incompetent to comprehend reality. There is no object of consciousness which can be ultimate as it is relative to consciousness, and is evidenced by it. It is consciousness alone which can be absolute and ultimate as consciousness is its own evidence (*svayamprakāśa*). The consciousness which Śāṅkara regards as absolute is not the consciousness which is relative to objects and so it is misleading to suggest that he accepts one of the terms of the anti-thesis of subject and object; Śāṅkara's absolute is beyond subject-object duality and is transcendent. In fact Brahman is said to be unknowable and unspeakable in the ordinary sense ; it is *śāntam* (silence). Śāṅkara is next to none in emphasising that the absolute is non-empirical (*avyavahāryam*) but he goes further than the Mādhyamika in insisting that the absolute must also be immediate (*aparokṣa*) otherwise it would be as good as nothing. He seeks the help of *śruti* not for the sake of any dogma but only as a guarantee that the rejection of everything empirical does not amount to nihilism, scepticism or agnosticism. The same point is elucidated with the help of the analysis of illusion which always requires a ground or *adhiṣṭhāna*. It is difficult to understand how the exponents of the Mādhyamika on the one hand assert that illusion is not *niradhiṣṭhāna* (groundless) and on the other hand also hold that "For the Madhyamika negation applies to both the 'this' and the 'snake'.⁸ To say that reflective consciousness itself "to which they both appear is absolute" is to talk Vedānta."

We may now briefly examine the allegation that there is an element of dogmatism in Śāṅkara's Advaitism. It is said that while Śāṅkara accepts one of the conflicting views of reality and illusion, the Mādhyamika does not do so. In this connection we may first of all point out that it is not quite fair to club Vedānta with substance philosophies like Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Mimāṃsā. Even Sāṃkhya is not a substance philosophy; neither Prakṛti nor Puruṣa is conceived as substance. If Vedānta is a substance-philosophy or identity view, it is in a very special sense so that the criticisms of the Mādhyamika against ordinary substance-philosophies like the Nyāya Vaiśeṣika fall flat when turned to Advaitism. As regards taking a particular view of reality, two things are forgotten. Vedānta does not start with a positive view of reality; by critical analysis it discovers Brahman to be *acintya* (unthinkable) and *avācya* (unspeakable). Even the apparently

8. Ibid p. 324

9. Ibid p. 325

positive terms such as *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* which are taken to give us the *svarūpa lakṣaṇa* (essential definition of Brahman) are interpreted only negatively, e. g. *sat* is *asat vyāvartaka* (negation of *asat*), etc. Secondly, it is forgotten that to the extent Vedānta takes a positive view of reality as for example, in saying that Brahman is the ground (*adhisthāna*) of appearance, to that extent even the Mādhyamika has to do so; he too regards the *tattva* as immanent (*dharmāṇām dharmatā*). Only the Mādhyamika is not able to show this immanence; but he has to admit it unless he is willing to make the *tattva* something wholly transcendent or unrealizable. Similarly, Advaitism does not start with a view of illusion. Rather it critically examines all the views of illusion and accepts only what is indispensable. Nor is it proper to find fault with Vedānta for analysing an empirical illusion, because without that the very question of truth does not arise, as has already been pointed out.

The Vedāntic identification of Brahman with the self is based on *śruti* and the Mādhyamika cannot justifiably quarrel with it. Firstly the Mādhyamika himself depends on *śruti* though not on the Upaniṣads. The acceptance of *śruti* is indispensable for every absolutist who regards the absolute as realizable. If this is not done, there is no guarantee that the Mādhyamika dialectic would lead us to *nirvāṇa* or would give rise to *prajñā* (intuition). This is something which can neither be empirically known nor logically inferred. Nāgārjuna is a Buddhist just because he accepts the Buddhist tradition. So it is not proper to charge Sankara alone and not Nāgārjuna with the dogmatism of accepting an extra-rational source, *śruti*. It must also be noted that depending on *śruti* does not amount to dogmatism. It is dogmatic only under two circumstances. Firstly when revelation is understood as historical revelation, i. e., revelation through a historical individual. If revelation is in the form of impersonal and beginningless tradition, then it is immune to objections that can be levelled against historical revelation. It is for this reason that the Mahāyānists themselves convert Buddha into a principle and regard Gotama as a manifestation of that principle and not as the first founder of Buddhism. The same view of revelation is taken by Vedānta also, but not by Semitic religions. The other circumstance in which acceptance of revelation becomes dogmatic is when the object of revelation is something which cannot be experienced here and now. This shortcoming is found neither in Vedānta nor in the Mādhyamika, because in the case of both

ultimate truth revealed by scripture can be experienced by all, and here and now; it is not a mere object of faith like *svarga* (heaven).

With the above consideration in view, it would appear that if there is a question of choice between Nāgārjuna and Śāṅkara, the latter will be found to be more consistent and complete. Vedānta makes explicit what is only implicit in Nāgārjuna specially by accepting the doctrine of the *prātibhāsika* and the doctrine of the immanence of Brahman as our very self. If Śāṅkara is dogmatic, Nāgārjuna too is no less so, but that is because spirituality as our concern with the transcendent is necessarily based on faith (scripture) and faith is probably what is mistaken for dogmatism. In both the systems, faith is only initial and not ultimate; it ends in experience.

THE CONCEPT OF AVAKTAVYA IN JAINISM†

Jainism is a realistic system. It not only holds that reality is pluralistic, but also that reality is many-faced (*anantadharmātmakam vastu*). In order to sustain this position Jainism develops a logic of sevenfold predication (*saptabhaṅginaya* or *syādvāda*). The development of this logic, in turn, depends principally on the concept of *avaktavya* (the unspeakable). As Satkari Mookerjee notes : "It is the concept of *avaktavya*...which gives the Jaina philosophy its distinctive character and individuality."¹

In spite of the great importance of this concept, it is surprising that the accounts of it given in most books on Indian philosophy are rather scanty, and what is worse, the accounts are contradictory. According to Hiriyanna, the concept of *avaktavya* "must be expressible as neither."² Another author seems to follow him when he says, "If we deny both existence and non-existence, if we negate the two different aspects of being and non-being together, the thing baffles all description. It becomes indescribable i.e. neither real or unreal."³ It may be pointed out at once that this seems to be quite a wrong interpretation of *avaktavya*. Apart from the fact that the Jaina texts⁴ do not support

† Printed in *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. XVIII, No. 3, July, 1968.

1. Satkari Mookerjee, *The Jaina Philosophy of Non-Absolutism* (Calcutta : Bharati Jain Parishad, 1944), p. 317.
2. M. Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy* (London : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1951), p. 165.
3. C. D. Sharma, *Indian Philosophy* (Varanasi : Nand Kishore & Brothers, 1952), p. 65.
4. A. B. Dhṛva, ed., *Syādvādamanjari* (Poona : Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1933) p. 143. *Syāt avaktavyam eveti yugapat vidhiniṣedhakalponayā caturthaḥ*. (The word *yugapat* [simultaneous] is to be noted here.)

this view, it is possible to show that it is incorrect on purely logical grounds. To say that a thing neither exists (*asti*) nor does not exist (*nāsti*) is sheer skepticism, and the Jaina would never accept it as a *bhaṅga* (predicate), and as one of the *mūlabhaṅgas* (primary predicates) at that. Further, if *avaktavya* means "neither," it cannot be combined with the first three *bhaṅgas* and so cannot give rise to the other *bhaṅgas*. This is nothing short of sabotaging the *saptabhaṅginaya* itself. What is worse, the interpretation of *avaktavya* as "neither" would make it indistinguishable from the fourth *koṭi* (alternative viewpoint) of the *Mādhyamika* *catuskoṭi*, as also from the *anirvacanīya* (indescribable as either being or non-being) of the Vedānta.

An interpretation which is quite contrary to the above is found in the *Sarvadarśana Saṅgraha*, which says, "When you wish to establish both at once, let it be declared 'indescribable' from the impossibility to describe it."⁵ Dr. Satkari Mookerjee agrees with this view and regards the *avaktavya* as the compresence of the two, *asti* and *nāsti*. But his remark that in the *avaktavya* "the two attributes are dissolved into one"⁶ is rather confusing, because the Jaina does not believe in any dissolution. Dr. Mookerjee seems to regard the *avaktavya* as a kind of synthesis of *asti* and *nāsti*.⁷ A quite serious objection to this view would be that it does not allow the *avaktavya* to remain a *mūlabhaṅga* but one dependent on or derived from *asti* and *nāsti*. The *mūlabhaṅgas* of the Jaina are different from those of the *Mādhyamika*. If the Jaina has to start with two *bhaṅgas* they would be *vaktavya* and *avaktavya*, and the former would be subdivided into *asti* and *nāsti*; otherwise the Jaina would have three *mūlabhaṅgas*. Either way *avaktavya* remains primary. So a correct view would emphasize the primary character of *avaktavya*. The other difficulty is that the interpretation which regards the *avaktavya* as a synthesis of two contradictories would throw us directly into self-contradiction.⁸ The third *bhaṅga*, namely, *asti ca nāsti ca* (is and is not) does not involve us in self-contradiction as the two contradictory predicates are asserted successively (*kramārpaṇa*) and not simultaneously. But in the *avaktavya* the two contradictories

5. E. B. Cowell, trans., *Sarvadarśana Saṅgraha of Mādhavācārya* (6th ed.; Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1961), p. 60.

6. Mookerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 114.

8. Hiriyanna, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

are asserted simultaneously (*sahārpaṇa*) and hence the question as to what the Jaina does to avoid this self-contradiction arises.

Does the Jaina blatantly accept self-contradiction or does he avoid it by inventing some device? No system of philosophy can afford to accept self-contradiction as valid, because if self-contradiction is accepted as valid without any qualifications, then there remains no weapon for criticism; anything which is said will have to be accepted, because even self-contradiction is valid. It is certain that the Jaina does not take leave of logic and consistency; he does criticize others by pointing out self-contradiction. Every system of philosophy has its contradictory which is regarded as false. This is why when a system has to accept a synthesis of contradictories as valid, it has to invent one device or another which at least seems to take off the edge from the contradictories. Hegel, who is the most outstanding believer in the synthesis of contradictories, has a saving device which works as a pinch of salt with which the contradictories are taken. According to him the contradictories are synthesized not as they are; there is a transformation which takes place in the moment of synthesis and this makes the thesis and antithesis harmonious. The problem that Hegel has to face is regarding the identity of the contradictories in the two states, namely, before and after the synthesis. If the contradictories are transformed they do not remain the same; if not, there is no harmony.

The Jaina too has to avoid self-contradiction, but not in the manner in which Hegel does, for the simple reason that the Jaina is not an idealist but a realist. It appears therefore that Mookerjee comes dangerously near Hegelianism when, in trying to meet the difficulty regarding the concept of *avaktavya*, he says, "The concrete unification of being and non-being is not a mere mechanical juxtaposition but a transformation of the two with their individualities unannulled. The Jaina does not find a logical contradiction in this act of synthesis, since he does not take it to be a logical process but an ontological fact which can be realised by intuition alone."⁹ The Hegelian influence is obvious, but it is also obvious that the Jaina cannot accept this view of *avaktavya*. Being a hard realist, the Jaina cannot regard knowledge as a transforming process; an idealist like Hegel could do that. Mookerjee makes the *avaktavya* an extra-logical thing or an object of intuition, and yet he calls it a synthesis. The point we have to note is that the

9. Mookerjee, *op cit.*, p. p. 114.

avaktavya is not a synthesis of opposites. If it were a synthesis there would be no point in again combining it with *asti* and *nāsti*. The Jaina introduces this concept because there is something which is not brought out either by *asti* or *nāsti* or by their successive combination; this is why this something is once again combined with *asti*, *nāsti*, and their combination.

The only view of *avaktavya* which is free from the above difficulties seems to be that of K. C. Bhattacharyya; for him the *avaktavya* is the non-distinction of being and negation. "The given indefinite—the unspeakable or *avaktavya* as it has been called, as distinct from the definite existent, presents something other than consecutive togetherness; it implies *sahārpaṇa* or copresentation which amounts to nondistinction or indeterminate distinction of being and negation in the above sense."¹⁰ Mookerjee quotes Bhattacharyya with approval and yet regards *avaktavya* as a synthesis; there seems to be an obvious confusion between non-distinction and synthesis. While non-distinction is prior to distinction, synthesis is posterior to it; while the former is a kind of potentiality, the latter is a kind of achievement. If there is no contradiction in the *avaktavya* it is not because the contradictories have been transformed or opposition overcome, but because there is no distinction of the contradictories.¹¹ Therefore *avaktavya* is not a synthesis of contradictories, but their inexpressible non-distinction. The implication is that *only what is expressible can be self-contradictory and not what is inexpressible or indescribable*. It is this view of *avaktavya* alone which can enable us to have the following: (1) the distinction of the *avaktavya* from skepticism or the fourth *koṭi* of the Mādhyamika, (2) the distinction of the *avaktavya* from the Hegelian synthesis, (3) the freedom of the *avaktavya* from self-contradiction, and (4) the preservation of *avaktavya* as a *mūla* or underived *bhaṅga*. The Jaina is not guilty of accepting blatantly the validity of self-contradiction or contradictories. If the *avaktavya* has to be rejected, it must be pointed out that there lurks a kind of

10. K. C. Bhattacharyya, ed., *Studies in Philosophy* (Calcutta : Progressive Publishers, 1958) Vol. I, p. 341.

11. The orthodox Jaina view is that there is no contradiction in the *avaktavya* because the contradictories are not absolute but relative to conditions. Cf. *Syādvādamāñjari*, stanza 24, *upādhibhedopahitaṃ viruddham*. But the point is that even if the contradictories are relative, they are simultaneous and hence there will be at least relative contradiction.

inconsistency in accepting this concept even in the sense of non-distinction, just as we have shown that there remains an inconsistency in Hegel even after the synthesis of the contradictories is accepted.

All the systems of Indian philosophy have criticized the concept of *avaktavya* because it is uncomfortable for them. But the concept is especially dangerous for the Mādhyamika, because the admission of *avaktavya* threatens the very structure of the dialectic. As is well known, the Mādhyamika thinks of four and only four—neither more nor less—alternative standpoints or *dṛṣṭis* not reducible to each other.¹² But *avaktavya* opens the possibility of there being more alternatives than four. Probably this is not a very serious difficulty. The more serious point is that it is a concept which is impregnable to dialectical criticism.¹³ The Mādhyamika therefore rejects *avaktavya* as a possible *dṛṣṭi*, even as the Jaina rejects the fourth *koṭi* of the Mādhyamika as mere skepticism. Now the question is: Is the Mādhyamika justified in rejecting *avaktavya*?

The Mādhyamika and the Jaina both agree that many views of reality are possible, but the difference between the two is that for the former these views are just views and not truths about reality, while for the latter these views are acceptable truths about reality. For the Jaina, thought represents reality¹⁴; for the Mādhyamika, thought misrepresents reality. But we are not concerned here with the question of whether thought represents or misrepresents reality. Our problem is; in how many possible ways can thought do so? The Mādhyamika begins with two *mūladṛṣṭis* and comes to have four in all. The Jaina begins with three *mūlabhaṅgas* and comes to have seven types of predication in all. The difference is obviously due to *avaktavya*.

We have drawn some distinctions about *avaktavya* above; additional distinctions must be drawn before the question of the legitimacy of the concept of *avaktavya* is taken up, because some other

12. T. R. V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1955), p. 129.

13. Cf. Th. Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1962), Vol. I, p. 17. "This method looks like an answer to the Mādhyamika method of proving the 'inexpressible' character of absolute reality by reducing its every possible predicate *ad absurdum* and thus reducing empirical reality to a mirage."

14. Murti, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

systems too seem to accept something like *avaktavya* or the inexpressible. On the face of it, the Advaitic conception of *Brahman* and the Mādhyamika conception of *śūnya* seem to be *avaktavya* or inexpressible inasmuch as they are beyond all thought and speech. But the *avaktavya* is undoubtedly different from *Brahman* or *śūnya* for the obvious reason that no claim is made for its being transcendent; the Jaina *avaktavya* is not inaccessible to thought but only to speech. If so, can it be compared to the misperception of a rope as a snake or the *prātibhāsika* (empirical illusion) which is said to be *anirvacanīya* or indescribable? The rope-snake is said to be indescribable because though it appears in consciousness, it is not real; it can be characterized neither as *sat* nor as *asat*, nor as both. We have already rejected the view of *avaktavya* as "neither *sat* nor *asat*"; *avaktavya* is both *sat* and *asat*, and so it is clear that it cannot be compared with the rope-snake which is *sad-asad vilakṣaṇa* or neither and hence *anirvacanīya*; it is not only a case of non-distinction, but an admission of another category different from both. Moreover, the rope-snake is cancelled when the error is recognized, but the *avaktavya* is not. Like the *anirvacanīya*, the *avaktavya* is different from both *sat* and *asat*, but unlike that category, it is a copresentation or nondistinction of the two terms. Like the fourth *koṭi* of the Mādhyamika, it is different from a synthesis of *sat* and *asat*, but unlike that, it is not a denial of *sat* and *asat*, but mere non-distinction. How is this nondistinction different from the concept of non-distinction (*akhyāti*) of the Prābhākaras? The difference is that in *akhyāti* the terms are distinct, but there is no consciousness of the distinction; but in the *avaktavya* the terms are non-distinct. Again, the terms of *akhyāti* are not necessarily contradictories, as is the case with *avaktavya*.

Having made the above distinctions clear, let us now proceed to see whether *avaktavya* can legitimately be accepted in philosophy. We are here reminded of the famous words of Wittgenstein: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent." To this Gellner retorts, "That which one would insinuate, thereof one must speak."¹⁵ The inexpressible has been insinuated both by mystics and critical philosophers, but they have chosen to be silent. Plato held that the highest truth could not be really written, as it is a communion between two souls. Plotinus and Eckhart thought in the same manner, Kant was silent about the thing-in-itself and so was Buddha. The *ṛsis* of the

15. E. Gellner, *The Words and Things* (London: Victor Gollanz Ltd., 1959), p. 265.

Upaniṣads too advise silence.¹⁶ But it must be clearly noted that the inexpressible in these cases is quite different from the *avaktavya*. The inexpressible in the abovementioned systems is transcendent to thought and not to speech only, and is therefore merely hinted at; the transcendent is not an alternative thought or view, and in this sense the Mādhyamika too accepts the inexpressible. But the peculiarity of the Jaina is that he wants to admit the inexpressible even on the empirical level,¹⁷ that is, as a view of reality. The inexpressible of the Jaina is neither transcendent nor a mere postulate, but something thinkable and knowable but not expressible. The transcendentalist's inexpressible is beyond thought and is unthinkable. Can we accept something which is thinkable, but not expressible?

K. C. Bhattacharyya says "The commonsense principle implied in its recognition is that what is *given* cannot be rejected simply because it is inexpressible by a single positive concept."¹⁸ Now the point is whether the inexpressible is really *given*. Probably Bhattacharyya takes *avaktavya* as a continuum like the *avidyā* of Advaita Vedānta, but for obvious reasons the Jaina cannot take *avaktavya* as a continuum or background, because for him *avaktavya* is a *particular* view or aspect of reality like *asti* and *nāsti*. The Jaina takes *avaktavya* as thinkable, but not expressible. Can thought accept it without making it expressible in the process? Is it merely a handicap of language that the *avaktavya* cannot be expressed?¹⁹ If so, can the inexpressible be at least thought, if not actually expressed? The dilemma is this: if it can be thought it can also be expressed; if it cannot even be thought, it cannot be regarded as a view or aspect of reality. The Mādhyamika rejected the Jaina *avaktavya* as it cannot even be thought. The unthinkable cannot be accepted in philosophy as a viewpoint; it can be accepted only as transcendent. The Jaina does not insinuate it or hint at it; he takes it as a viewpoint and regards it as thinkable but not expressible, and that is the contradiction or impossibility in his position. The inexpressible

16. Cf., *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* II 4: *yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha-*

17. The *viśeṣas* of the *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* and the *svalakṣaṇas* of the Buddhist are also inexpressible because they are absolutely particular and unique, but they are not empirical entities.

18. Bhattacharyya, *op. cit.*, p. 341-342.

19. Dhruva, *op. cit.*, p. 127. *tādṛśāsya śabdasya asambhavāt avaktavyam.*

or the *avaktavya* cannot be equated with *asti* and *nāsti* as a position; thought must be thoughtless here. It may be asked whether this criticism applies to the *anirvacanīya* of the Vedānta. Can anything which is not transcendent be regarded as *anirvacanīya* (inexpressible)? The Vedāntin would say that there is no harm in accepting the *anirvacanīya* as a concept describing the unreal because the worst that can be said against it is that it is unreal, and the Vedāntin would jump with joy to see that you have caught the point. The difficulty arises only when the *anirvacanīya* or the inexpressible is taken as real; and not only real, but even as *empirically* real. This is what the Jaina does. Hence the *avaktavya* should either be given up by the Jaina, or he should be transcendentalist.

CAN ŚRUTI BE FALSE ?

In this paper we are not concerned with the general question whether śruti ought to be accepted as an independent pramāṇa or source of knowledge. It is a very well discussed question and we take it that śruti is an independent pramāṇa. Much less are we concerned here with the more general question as to what are the characteristics of śruti. It may be safely assumed that śruti is very well known. In any case, the question whether śruti can be false arises if and only if śruti is accepted as an independent pramāṇa and not otherwise. And the question arises because we find that the possibility of being false cannot be ruled out in the case of any of the ordinary pramāṇas. Perception, inference etc. are all found to be contradicted either by the same type of pramāṇa or by some other pramāṇa; they are all likely to be false and are true only until they are contradicted. But when we come to think of śruti, we are faced with certain problems and it seems difficult to accept even in principle the possibility of any pramāṇa contradicting śruti or the possibility of śruti being false. Verily śruti has certain peculiarities not shared by other pramāṇas.

I

Prime facie, it would appear that śruti too is like every other pramāṇa capable of being false. After all, the validity of a statement depends on the speaker, and it is quite possible that the speaker is either ill informed or ignorant or inconsistent or a deliberate liar. Under these conditions, śabda pramāṇa is likely to be false. It is

only when the speaker is competent and truthful that his word will be true, otherwise it is likely to be false. The falsity of a speaker's statement can be established either logically by pointing out self-contradiction or empirically by setting some stronger *pramāṇa* such as perception against him. A statement may be contradicted either by the speaker himself or by some other speaker who is more reliable or by some other *pramāṇa*. Verbal testimony therefore cannot be above doubt or the region of falsity; there seems to be nothing peculiar about it.

It is obvious that the above *prima facie* case ignores the doctrine of *svataḥ prāmāṇya* or the self-validity of knowledge. The validity of a *pramāṇa* cannot depend except on itself, otherwise there will be infinite regress. The validity of a *pramāṇa*, it should be noted, may be tested or ascertained by some other source; but is certainly not derived from that. This is true of *śabda* as of any other *pramāṇa*. Further, the above argument applies only to *laukika vākya* or statements about empirical objects. It is in the case of *laukika vākya* only that the reliability of the speaker is relevant and the question of testing the validity of his statement otherwise arises. It does not hold good regarding scriptural statements, as they are not about empirical objects. Finally, the argument that the validity of *śabda* depends on the speaker presupposes that all *śabda* requires a speaker or originates from a speaker. This is an assumption which is questioned by the *Mīmāṃsaka* in his doctrine of the *apauruṣyatva* of the Veda; the Veda is for him not someone's speech but impersonal, because Veda is beginningless. For all these reasons, the case of *śruti* is quite different from that of other *pramāṇas*. As *śruti* is not a *pramāṇa* concerning any empirical object, it can never be contradicted by other *pramāṇas* or be false. *Śruti* may be misunderstood or it may not be *śruti* at all but it cannot be contradicted. This can be proved in three different ways.

II

The first method of demonstrating that *śruti* is outside the region of falsifiability is found in *Mīmāṃsā*. Briefly stated the argument is this. The Vedas are beginningless and not due to any author, and so they are free from all those shortcomings which human beings have. The falsity of Vedas would be conceivable if and only

if they were by some author or authors, but they are not, and so they are not falsifiable. If it is questioned as to how there can be a sentence without a maker of the sentence, the Mimāṃsaka puts forth his thesis that language or sentence is not man-made but beginningless. There never was a time when there was an utter absence of language, because if it were so, language could not be created. The very thought of creating a language already presupposes some language. Given a language, you can create any number of languages but not when there is no language. If you have a body, you can make instruments for the use of the body, but if you have no body, you cannot have even instruments. Just as life presupposes life so does language presuppose language.

The thesis regarding the beginninglessness of language is really a bold one. Ordinarily it is supposed that all language is dependent on the speaker and that language is a man-made phenomenon. The scientific theory of evolution lends support to this view and points out that like everything else language too has grown along with the evolution of man and his society. That there is no one language for all men, that new languages are even now coming into existence, that every language has a history and has a local tinge about it—all these facts further confirm the thesis that language is man-made; it has a history and therefore a beginning.

Thus science and philosophy both seem to join hands in protesting against the doctrine of the beginninglessness of language. While this is so, the Mimāṃsaka's arguments are also worth considering. If we come to think of it, it would appear that language cannot be anybody's creation, not even of God, and that is because of the peculiar nature of language. The Nyāya thinkers hold that language was created by God. If so, the question would arise whether it is possible for God to think, and more specifically, to think of creating a language, in the utter absence of any language. Per impossible, even if God could think even in the absence of any language, the question would be whether the language created by Him could be understood by anyone. Could God communicate by means of His own private language?

That language was originally not created by God will be quickly conceded today, but it seems more difficult to set aside the view that

language is a human convention. However, if language is supposed to be man-made, is it possible to explain how man came to make it? Before creating a language one should be able to feel its absence and its necessity, but neither can be felt in the utter absence of any language. Much less is it possible to propose and to plan to have a language. And then, how are we to win a consensus? It is very easy to suggest that noun-words became current by pointing out a thing and uttering something at the same time. But the real issue is: how was the thought behind this plan possible? How were the non-object symbols conventionalised? In fact a more pertinent question would be whether language grew or could grow word by word or sentence by sentence. The ordinary way of learning a language is through sentences; words come later as abstractions. That there are many languages and not one or that they have a history and evolution and that even now new languages come into existence—all this does not prove the *absolute* beginning of language; all these phenomena are relative to the prior existence of some language. The attempt to prove the absolute origination of language is doomed to fail.

Arguing in the above manner the Mimāṃsakas come to believe that language is beginningless. But one may argue that even if it be conceded that language is beginningless, it cannot be held that the Vedas are beginningless; Vedas must have some author. To this the Mimāṃsaka replies by making a reference to their doctrine of *nitya-karmas* or daily karmas. They argue that if the Vedas had some author, he would have been traditionally known, because the Vedas are used in daily worship and are handed down from father to son or teacher to student. The author of Vedas has therefore no chance of passing into oblivion; the Vedas are unlike other books in as much as they are recited daily and are used daily in various ways. It is inconceivable that the Vedas could have an author not known to tradition. Being authorless the Vedas are also defectless and therefore beyond falsifiability.

III

The Mimāṃsakas do not believe in God and in creation by God, and so it would appear that they have invented a peculiar device of proving the infallibility of Vedas. But theists who regard the

scripture as the word of God, that is as *pauruṣeya*, need not depend on the *Mīmāṃsaka* argument; they take the view that the validity of the scripture depends on the omniscience and the veracity of God. God knows everything and He expresses the knowledge of truth in the form of scripture; the Vedas are His breath; (*yasya niḥ svasitā vedāḥ*).

While the theistic view of the scripture seems to be attractive, there are two serious problems here. Firstly the question is : Does God make the Vedas or does He merely reveal them ? Like the *Nyāya*, the theists are generally speaking believers in *ārambhavāda* (the doctrine of the novelty of effect), an extreme form of which is the doctrine of absolute creation. So the scripture must be something new brought into existence by God. But since truth or the content of scripture cannot be created, it seems difficult to make out in what sense God has created the Vedas. Secondly, the question is : How does God communicate the Vedas ? How does He have any communion with man ? If He has a form and body, He will be finite and limited; because the realists cannot afford to take the position that God's form and body are false. If, however, He does not have a form and a body, how can He possibly have contact with man ? Vedas cannot be revealed by a formless God.

The *Advaitin* seeks to avoid the above difficulties with the help of his *māyāvāda*. For him, the world is not beginningless as the *Mīmāṃsaka* would have it, nor is it created in the sense in which the theist takes it to be so, as there can be no such thing as absolute beginning; we must accept *satkāryavāda*. The Vedas are never non-existent; they are only non-manifest. At the beginning of every creation, the Lord reveals the Vedas and so the Vedas are *pauruṣeya* or revealed by Infinite Person or *Īśvara* in this sense; they are not created or produced by *Īśvara*. The *Advaitin* would agree with the *Mīmāṃsaka* that *Īśvara* is not the absolute author of Vedas; He is just their revealer. Truth (Vedas) cannot be created; it can only be known and expressed, Vedas as symbolising truth are in this sense independent of any person, even infinite person (*Īśvara*); truth is impersonal and absolute and not relative and personal. This is why in *Advaitism*, Brahman the impersonal absolute is regarded as superior to *Īśvara* or the Personal. *Īśvara* knows Himself as

Brahman or the impersonal truth; He does not consider Himself to be a person. This is a point not appreciated in Viśiṣṭādvaita and other forms of theism. That Īśvara knows Himself as Brahman implies two things: that Brahman and Īśvara are not different, and also that Īśvara cannot be the ultimate (Brahman).

As regards the problem of communication, the Advaitin holds that Īśvara can be born as a human teacher, and that would not make Him finite and limited because name and form (nāma-rūpa) are really false. So consistently Divine Incarnation is possible only if we accept māyāvāda. And unless Īśvara is born as human teacher, there is for man no chance of knowing or understanding the Vedas (ācāryavān puruṣo veda). This is the significance of regarding Ācārya and Īśvara as one; only Īśvara, the eternal knower of truth can be Ācārya. It would appear that Jainism and Buddhism do not regard Īśvara but man only as the first teacher, but really speaking if man could be the first teacher, no man would need a teacher. The first teacher (ādi gurū) can be only one who does not need a teacher i.e. who knows truth eternally. The first teacher in Jainism and Buddhism must of necessity be one who does not need a teacher, one who knows truth eternally. Like Advaitism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam explicitly regard God alone as the Teacher. Śiva is the eternal and universal teacher.

It would seem that there is a circularity in the Vedāntic position; the Vedas reveal Īśvara and Īśvara reveals the Vedas. It may be pointed out here that what this doctrine really means is that Īśvara cannot be known unless He reveals Himself through the Vedas. Knowledge of Īśvara must ultimately depend on Īśvara.

IV

If it is difficult to accept the infallibility of the Vedas on the basis of their beginninglessness, and if it is also difficult to accept the infallibility of Vedas as the word of God, it is possible to establish the infallibility of the Vedas yet in a third manner. This method is not linked up with any theory of language or with belief in the existence of a personal God. The argument is derived from the very nature and purport of śruti and may be put in the following form.

What is it that the Vedas are meant for? Do they give us a kind of knowledge which can be had from other sources or not? If it is held that the Vedas impart a kind of knowledge which can be had otherwise also, then, obviously, the Vedas would be superfluous, and there would be no point in accepting them as an additional source of knowledge. The Vedas are indispensable and the indispensability of Vedas can be upheld if and only if it is established that there is some kind of knowledge which can be had from Vedas and Vedas alone. The Vedāntin and the Mīmāṃsaka both vigorously advocate that there is something which cannot be had except from the Vedas. In this sense, they are, like the Buddhists, *pramāṇa-viplava-vādins*. They differ only regarding the content of the Vedas. The Mīmāṃsaka contends that it is *vidhi* (injunction) alone that is the primary teaching of the Vedas. *Vidhi* or "the ought" is for them something which cannot be given by any other *pramāṇa* as all other *pramāṇas* are concerned with the "is." Reason for example may justify and explain 'the ought,' but it cannot discover it. The Kantian attempt to derive the moral principle from reason alone is a failure as it presupposes and does not prove that there is anything like the categorical imperative. Kant admits that he cannot demonstrate the relation between virtue and happiness and that it is just a matter of faith. The Critique of Practical Reason does not make any discovery; it is just a rationalisation of the commandments (*śruti*); a commandment cannot be discovered; it can only be heard. *Vidhi* is not a cognitive statement and cannot be cognised like a fact. *Śruti* does not give us a knowledge of injunction but injunction itself.

It may be further argued against the Mīmāṃsaka that though *Vidhi* (injunction) is not a statement of fact, the fruit or result of *Vidhi* as conceived by Mīmāṃsā is stated as a fact when, for example, it is said that the doer of sacrifice attains *svarga* (heaven). This being the statement of fact is open to contradiction by other *pramāṇas*. This objection is answered by the Mīmāṃsaka by pointing out that the attainment of *svarga* though a fact is not an empirical fact; it refers to something unseen or *adīṣṭa*, and the unseen cannot be either confirmed or contradicted by any *pramāṇa* which is relevant and effective only in the realm of the seen. Thus according to Mīmāṃsā *Vidhi* (injunction) and the result of *Vidhi* are both above contradiction by any other *pramāṇa*.

The Vedāntin argues against the Mīmāṣaka that while *vidhi* (injunction) also may be the teaching of the Vedas, it is certainly not the only teaching. The other purport of the Vedas is to reveal some-kind of reality which is not otherwise known or at least not known fully: the Vedas reveal the true nature of the self or the transcendent (the *avyavahārya* or the unconditioned). That the self is not truly known is obvious from the fact that we have contradictory beliefs about the self. That the transcendent cannot be known by means of any of the natural sources of knowledge, follows from the fact that all the *pramāṇas* being ultimately based on perception are necessarily limited to the empirical sphere and cannot reach the unconditioned. It is under these circumstances that the *śruti* becomes indispensable. The unconditioned alone and nothing else is the object of *śruti* and it is the object of *śruti* alone and of no other *pramāṇa*. If anything else other than the unconditioned were the object of *śruti*, that would be only the empirical, and then there would be no need of *śruti* for knowing the empirical. And if some other *pramāṇa* could know the unconditioned, then also *śruti* would be redundant. Those systems which like the Nyāya and Thomism admit the possibility of knowing God through reason also cannot demonstrate the indispensability of revelation.

Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta both insist that there is something which cannot be known by any other means except the Vedas. If this is granted, then it follows that the Vedas cannot be falsified or contradicted by other *pramāṇas*, because other *pramāṇas* have no jurisdiction over the sphere to which *śruti* is relevant; they can deny only those objects which they cognise. Just as eyes cannot affirm or deny whether there is smell in the air, so also perception etc. cannot affirm or deny what is not their object. So by the very nature of the case, there can be nothing which can prove the falsity of Vedas unless Vedas are taken to tell us something about the empirical. The positivists and the atheists miserably fail to see that the *pramāṇas* on which they depend for the denial of God have really no *locus standi* in the matter. The absence of an object can be known only with the help of the same *pramāṇa* which knows its presence; in fact the knowledge of absence is nothing but the failure of the appropriate *pramāṇa* to know it (*anupalabdhi*). If anyone claimed that God was an object of perception, then the empiricist would be right in denying God on the ground that He is not seen. But if God is beyond all these *pramāṇas*, there

seems to be no way of denying Him, Śruti therefore cannot be falsified or contradicted; it is infallible.

There is yet another question to be considered. If śruti cannot be contradicted by other pramaṇas, can other pramaṇas be contradicted by śruti? The answer is obvious. The object of śruti being only the transcendent, it has nothing to do with the empirical which is the proper sphere of other pramaṇas. It is this that is meant when it is said that even hundreds of śruti cannot prove that fire is cold. But it may be said : does not the śruti declare the world to be false even though it is taken to be real by other pramaṇas? Yes, it is so; but it should be remembered that the proposition that the world is false is not an empirical proposition. The śruti does not say that the world is empirically false and so it does not contradict other pramaṇas; the world is said to be false from the standpoint of the transcendent (paramārthataḥ).

V

But it may be argued that from the fact that the śruti cannot be contradicted, it does not follow that śruti is true. It may not be possible to contradict the proposition that there is life on the other side of the moon, but it does not follow that it is true that there is life on the moon. To this our answer is two-fold. Firstly, the proposition that there is life on the moon cannot be regarded as śruti for the simple reason that it is not concerned with the transcendent or the unconditioned. In principle it is possible to know by other means whether there is or is not life on the moon. One may deny the status of pramāṇa to śruti (and we cannot enter into that question here) but if śruti is accepted as a pramāṇa, it cannot be contradicted by any other pramāṇa; it must be true. Secondly, Śankara points out that the knowledge imparted by śruti need not remain indirect for ever. It is possible to have a direct and immediate experience of the truth of śruti here and now. It is possible to have a confirmation of śruti by one's direct experience of self as Brahman here and now. Brahman-realization is not like the attainment of *svarga* which can be had only hereafter and not here. It is in this way that the validity of śruti is established positively. The scriptural truth is for the Advaitin doubly certain; negatively it cannot be contradicted and positively it can be realized by anyone here and now.